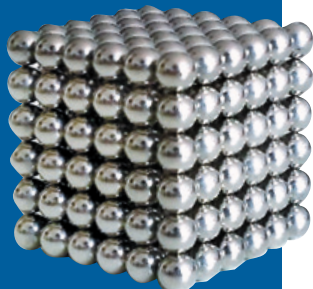


Gadgets to beat
summer blues

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Vespa the latest
old fashion

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Visit a southern
Paradise on Earth

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Culture reborn after death

Last year's Sichuan earthquake killed 30,000 Qiang people: 10 percent of the entire ethnic group.

But from the loss, Qiang artists found a chance to revive their culture, which dates back at least 3,000 years. "Wind of Qiang," their song-and-dance drama, comes to Beijing's stage next month to share the spirit of the Qiang people with the world.

Learn about Qiang culture on Pages 12-13



Players waiting
to log back
into Warcraft

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African expats
seek dreams
in Guangzhou

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Even China's
top brands go
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Chandelier a
symbol of
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Banks suspend credit, students left cardless

By Venus Lee

A number of banks, including Bank of China (BOC), China Merchants Bank (CMB) and Bank of Communications, are suspending credit card service for college students. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) and Agricultural Bank of China have raised their requirements for card approval to block most students.

CMB was one of the first banks to block college student access to credit cards. "We stopped issuing cards to students at the end of last year," Wu Jian, the bank's media manager, said. "College students have long been thought of as largely untapped and with strong consumption potential, but their lack of employment and stable income makes them a high risk group for the credit industry since they cannot pay back their loans on time."

Because more and more students are defaulting on their credit debt, the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) issued a new rule to prohibit banks from offering cards to college students

last week.

"No one knows when the ban will be lifted," Wu said.

CIB and BOC also confirmed they canceled credit card service for college students. ICBC continues to offer credit cards, but with tightened restrictions for students. The inspection of the card's co-guarantor is especially careful, an ICBC media worker surnamed Li said.

Several years ago, in order to grab up college students as potential customers, many banks offered credit card services with a low interest rate. The move boosted student consumption, but many students were left unable to pay off their debt.

"China's credit industry is still in its infancy. Some students start spending and never think ahead to when they have to pay off the debt. CBRC's regulations on student credit cards should help further the development of the credit card industry," said Yin Jianfeng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Finance and Banking.



Many student credit card holders have defaulted on their debts.

CFP Photo

New law to license more disabled drivers

A draft amendment to the driver's license law has raised new questions about the right of disabled to drive a vehicle.

According to a report issued by the People's Daily Online, a Web site run by the Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily*, many netizens disagreed with the police that disabled people should drive "cars specially made for the disabled." The Web site divided suggestions from posters into several categories.

"Some argued that there are few disabled drivers and specially making cars for them will lead to higher costs for car makers - which will in turn increase the price for everyone," the report said.

The Ministry of Public Security issued a draft amendment to the driver's license law to solicit public opinion from July 9 to 20.

The draft included new measures that would grant licenses to more disabled people, including the hearing-disabled.

Netizens preferred cars "equipped with driving assistance devices," the report said. This means the disabled can drive any car with such a device instead of only a certain kind of car.

The draft regulation also bans ordinary drivers from driving cars specially made for the disabled.

"Netizens argued that this may stop family members from driving the cars, so families of the disabled may have to buy another car," the report said.

At a forum on the Web site, more than 1,000 posts were left to discuss the draft amendment.



Driving has long been a dream for many disabled people.

CFP Photo

"Great news! Us deaf people are finally allowed to drive," said a post at the forum.

According to the draft, people with partial hearing loss can apply for a license if they can pass hearing tests by using a hearing aid.

The draft also allows those with a paralyzed or amputated leg to sit behind the wheel, but they must pass health examinations. Present law only allows those with a paralyzed or amputated left leg to drive.

Some netizens frowned upon the compulsory labeling of a disabled driver as it may violate pri-

vacy and dignity of the disabled. Instead, they suggest the drivers carry their handicapped license and present it when required.

They also suggested that the police reduce the frequency of health examinations from once a year to every three to five years.

Many posts called for allowing people with other missing or paralyzed limbs to drive.

"I had four fingers amputated but never felt different from others. I could drive even without assistance equipment," one poster said.

At the annual session in March

of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, Shan Jianming submitted his proposal to lawmakers online, calling for more disabled people to be given the right to drive.

Zhang Haidi, chairperson of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, said, "Disabled drivers have very good (driving) records in other countries. They cause fewer car accidents because they tend to be more defensive."

"Driving is one of their dreams and we should help make it come true," she said.

(Xinhua)

West Zhongguancun to be creative industry base

The west zone of Zhongguancun, often referred to as China's "Silicon Valley," is adjusting its business model to attract new businesses, according to the adjustment plan published by the Haidian district government on July 22.

The changes are hoped to draw in more cultural creative and scientific financial industries, as well as the headquarters of high-tech companies and their research and development centers.

Some intellectual property rights agencies, consulting corporations, law offices and human resources service organizations, such as the Beijing Overseas Talents Center and China Postdoctoral Science Foundation, are also being encouraged to settle in the zone, according to the plan.

Some business models will be restricted in their expansion, and others will be eliminated, said Fu Shouqing, chief executive assistant of Haidian District. Government regulators are still working out support measures for the business adjustment, though an announcement is expected soon.

Fu said western Zhongguancun is in chaos in terms of business orientation.

Different business models coexist in the area, including those engaged in high technology, trade, shopping malls and catering. There is repeated construction at the electronic marketplaces, which will soon be restricted in expansion.

The plan will divide the west zone into six service areas: scientific and financial, technology intermediaries, headquarters, creative industries, trade and exhibition of high-tech products and supporting services.

The west zone of Zhongguancun, a 95-hectare area stretching from Suzhou Street to Zhongguancun Street, and from North Fourth Ring Road south to Haidian South Road, has been an electronic haven since the early 1980s.

The plan adopted by the State Council Wednesday aims to promote the country's cultural industry and encourages private and foreign capital flow.

The council said government investment in the industry should increase, and that taxation and financial policies, followed by the legal and market environment, should improve to support the industry's development.

(By Wang Dong)

WoW players in limbo another week

By Wang Dong

An empty forum post titled "Jia Junpeng, your mother is calling you home for dinner" is the top thread on Baidu's "World of Warcraft Forum."

The post, made July 16, received 7 million page views and 300,000 comments within one day.

"What we are following is not a post, but loneliness," one respondent wrote, referring to the author's boredom that led to this post.

The respondents, mostly World of Warcraft (WoW) players, have reason to feel lonely. WoW's Chinese servers went offline since June 7 when maker Blizzard Entertainment switched its network from The9 to NetEase, another local gaming company.

New operators of foreign games must submit to government approval, according to an announcement made by the Ministry of Culture late this April.

The ministry forced NetEase to remove some content it considered "too violent," and granted the game operator permission to bring the network online on July 30.

"Of course we have been affected by the (two months of) downtime!" Gao Yan, a network administrator of an Internet cafe, said. His cafe has an area reserved for WoW players which has been vacated since June.

Media reports said China is

home to 5 million WoW players, and those players have 200 million yuan tied up in their accounts through the purchase of game cards.

"The players are stuck in limbo," said Wei Xiangqiu, a WoW player. "We do not know what we should do (about our money)."

Many have become increasingly upset with the wait. *Southern Weekly* reported the servers NetEase operates for another online game were attacked by 5,000 people on June 29.

But Wei said most players are worried less about the money than they are about getting back into the game. Players of massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) invest an enormous amount of time, energy and emotion in their world.

They are also seeking who to blame for this outage.

"Both The9 and NetEase should be blamed," Qiu Baochang, director of a Beijing committee of consumer rights lawyers, said. According to contract law, both operators are responsible since both sold game cards but failed to provide service.

The9 has refused to comment on the case, and NetEase could not be reached for comment.

WoW is a popular MMORPG around the world. It began offering service to the Chinese mainland on April 26, 2005.



Players are still waiting to re-enter the world of Azeroth. CFP Photo

Qingdao approved to flush with seawater

By Jin Zhu

A residential community in Jiaonan, a satellite city of Qingdao, Shandong Province, has become the first city on the mainland to flush its toilets using seawater instead of freshwater.

The pilot project to reconfigure Jiaonan's pipes was approved after an inspection by the Ministry of Science and Technology, State Oceanic Administration (SOA) and the Institution of Seawater Desalination and Multipurpose Utilization of the SOA.

Project officials said using seawater to flush is feasible after two years of work. The government authorized building seawater flushing facilities in the community in 2006, but the project met with technological difficulties such as seawater purification, disinfection and biochemical treatment and meeting water quality standards for draining.

"After processing at the beachside facilities located 1.2 kilometers from the community, the seawater appears no different in color or smell from the freshwater already piped to every house. It can be directly used to flush toilets," Zhang Zhishan, the project engineer, said.

"The project had a total investment of 6 million yuan, and nearly 3,600 families in the community are already using seawater to flush their toilets," he said.

As one of many cities struggling with a shortage of freshwater, the project has special meaning for Qingdao. An estimated 30 to 35 percent of the city's total domestic water gets flushed down the toilet.

"At present, we can save 300 tons of water per day and over 100,000 tons of water each year in this community alone," Zhang said.

Seawater flushing is also a cost saver for the residents. Processed seawater costs 0.7 yuan per ton – much less than freshwater. Seawater is also used to refill the community swimming pool.

"For me, the most obvious advantage of seawater is in removing toilet odor. Since we started using seawater in 2008, our ventilation fan has rarely been turned on," said Li Tongchang, one of the first residents in the community to get seawater.

The one drawback is the cost. Building the seawater flushing facilities is a large obstacle for poorer coastal towns that are suffering from water shortages.

"As more residents move into the community and use seawater, the cost will fall," Zhang said.

Beijing named 'happiest city'



CFP Photo

The capital was selected as the happiest city, based on a survey conducted at bus stops in six cities included Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Pollsters questioned around 5 million people.

The activity in Beijing, which invited citizens to choose between a smiling or crying face, lasted two weeks and concluded Sunday. Among 820,000 respondents, 56 percent chose the smiling face.

Ten bus stations were equipped with LED screens to conduct the survey. The final ranking, ordered most to least happy, was Beijing, Shanghai, Kunming, Xi'an, Guangzhou and Chengdu. (By Han Manman)

Guangdong's expats protest

Africans seek their dreams in China



Last week's protest by Africans in Guangzhou brought the community in spotlight.

CFP Photo

Africans clash with cops

If it was not for last Wednesday's protest, today would have been business as usual for Mamado Bery, a 29-year-old Nigerian trader. Bery buys bulk clothing at a Guangzhou market and ships it back to Nigeria, where his brother sells it at a markup.

But today, Bery is accepting interviews from media groups all over the country. He was on the scene when the protest began, and has become something of a celebrity since he appeared on a local TV program and answered a few questions that day.

Bery, a stall owner at Guangzhou's Tianxiu market, said he was doing business that afternoon when he heard the disturbance outside and someone shouting that an African vendor was dead.

"My first reaction was to run out and see what happened, since I knew other African stall owners around the area," he said.

Bery and his neighboring vendor did not see the body when they arrived at the Kuangquan Street police station. Witnesses at the scene said the man was a Nigerian who jumped from a second floor window when police began a passport raid.

More Africans gathered at the police station later in the afternoon and disrupted traffic, Bery said. The crowd was later peacefully dispersed by the police.

A spokesman for the Guangzhou public security bureau denied the Nigerian was dead, and said he had been injured and taken to a hospital, where he remained in critical condition.

The man had overstayed his visa and was involved in illegal foreign currency exchanges, according to a police statement.

Police refused to reveal the man's name, citing the ongoing investigation.

To China

Bery is typical of Africans who seek their dreams in Guangzhou. As Sino-Africa trade booms, Guangzhou, the world's factory, is attracting more and more Africans

By Huang Daohen

It is rare - virtually unheard of - for foreign residents in China to protest.

That changed last Wednesday when Africans in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, took to the streets. In seconds, more than 100 Africans had descended on and encircled a local police station.

The clash aside, many were more surprised by how many Africans are living in China. How do they earn a living, and are they used to life here?

Beijing Today talked to some of Guangzhou's African residents who have chased their dreams to the Middle Kingdom.



Africans dominate the "Chocolate Town."



Photos provided by Nanfang Daily

to work in wholesale trade of garments and daily commodities.

Before Bery came to China, his heaven was Lagos, Nigeria's largest city.

But that changed when he arrived in Guangzhou. "China is the real heaven," he said.

He managed an auto parts store in Lagos five years ago, when he and his brother worked reselling tires, steering wheels and seats imported from China at a 1,000 percent markup.

Every time he went to source parts, he would end up at a clothing, jewelry or convenience store where everything was "Made in China," he said.

In September of 2007, Bery's father, who worked at a Nigerian embassy in Europe, helped him obtain a Chinese visa so he could seek his fortune. His first home in Guangzhou was a 10-square-meter single room with a single bed, a set of drawers and a sofa. He shared a bathroom with three other African traders.

Now he runs a successful business and has created a comfort-

able life in the chaotic metropolis.

Williams Oladele, 25, is one of Bery's closest Nigerian friends and a bundle of energy. He always cranks the stereo to rock out. "I'll admit that China is better than Nigeria in many ways. But in music, the best you can do is copy us," he said.

Oladele came to China a year ago and opened a hair salon near

"They hope that after struggling for 4-5 years in China, they will be able to open a trade company at home and make a better life for their families."

Bery's stall. Everything in his salon, from wallpaper to sofa, is the same bright red. His customers also come in monochrome: black.

"Chinese salons don't understand African hair, so [the Africans] all come to my store," he said.

Chocolate Town under pressure

In Guangzhou, a 10-square-kilometer area centered around

Hongqiao, where Bery's store is located, has been nicknamed Chocolate Town by the local taxi drivers. The nickname came from the dominant physical feature of the area's residents: black skin.

Chocolate Town is hopping every afternoon as thousands of Africans seem to suddenly appear in groups of two or three to comb the street stalls with their large, black plastic bags.

The stalls rarely boast attractive decoration, Bery said. Samples are piled up on the ground, hung on the walls or tossed carelessly into display cases. But the cases read like a who's who list of the world's top brands: Dolce and Gabbana jeans, Adidas shoes, Gucci high heels, Louis Vuitton purses and Armani underwear.

The prices are ridiculous, with Dolce and Gabbana jeans at 20 yuan a pair and Gucci high heels for 100 yuan.

Then again, everything is fake.

But the Nigerians do not care, Bery said. Nigeria has

few factories, and few mind getting counterfeits. "As long as the shoes have an Adidas logo, that's enough. They just have to be cheap," he said.

Official statistics show that the number of Africans in Guangzhou has grown 30 to 40 percent annually since 2003. The community may be as large as 200,000 people from Nigeria, Guinea, Cameroon, Liberia and Mali. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, comes in first place.

The population boom of African traders and businesspeople reflects growing ties between China and Africa, but it also introduces problems, Mo Jun, director of the foreign affairs office under the Guangzhou municipal government, said.

"Some African traders stay here without legal passports," he said. "There are also management problems due to the culture clash."

Bery agreed cultural differences caused many inconveniences. Many taxi drivers are unwilling to drive a "chocolate" person. "They don't like our perfumes. Some drivers will use excuses like 'You're too big. You can't fit in the car,' or 'I don't understand your language,'" he said.

But the most serious problem is visa control, Bery said.

Getting a visa to China has become a serious challenge. Many Africans line up patiently in front of Chinese embassies in Africa, fighting for their chance at one of the limited visas. African passport holders are subject to a strict quota system.

But that will not affect Bery's determination to stay in China. Bery said he and all other Africans living in Guangzhou share the same dream: They hope that after struggling for four to five years in China, they will be able to open a trade company or a service center at home and make a better life for their families.

California apologizes to Chinese Americans

What's in an apology? Some expressions of remorse are commonplace – we hear them on the playground when kids smack each other on the head, or they land in your inbox after a friend forgets your birthday. It's the grand-scale apologies, it seems, that are harder to come by.

On July 17, the US's California legislature quietly approved a landmark bill to apologize to the state's Chinese-American community for racist laws enacted as far back as the mid-19th century Gold Rush.



An engraving of Chinese gold-miners in California



An 1850 photograph shows one of the many Chinese laborers who came to California during the Gold Rush. Photos provided by Chinese Historical Society of America

The new bill released last Friday recognizes the contributions Chinese immigrants have made to the state, particularly their work on the Transcontinental Railroad.

The apology is the latest in a wave of official acts of remorse around the globe. In 2006, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a similar apology, expressing regret to Chinese Canadians for unequal taxes imposed on them in the late 19th century.

The California resolution moved quickly through the state legislature since it was first introduced in February. "It's symbolic to recognize that the state made mistakes," says assembly member Paul Fong, who co-sponsored the legislation with assembly member Kevin de Leon. "These laws reverberate to this date because racism still exists."

Most of the direct victims of the laws in question have already passed away. Fong's grandfather was held for two months at Angel

Island, an immigration station near San Francisco that targeted and detained several hundred thousand Chinese immigrants from 1910 to 1940.

Dale Ching, 88, arrived at Angel Island from Guangdong Province in 1937 at age 16. Though his father was a US citizen, immigration authorities detained Ching for 3 months. "My intent was to try to have a better life, better than in China," he says. "But at that time, they didn't want you to get ahead."

How times have changed. In the throes of huge budget cuts, California is wooing cash-flush mainland Chinese tourists to its sun-kissed coastline and world-famous theme parks. So far this year, the state's Travel and Tourism Commission has opened offices in three Chinese cities. In 2005, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger toured China on a six-day trade mission to peddle his state's produce, technology and raw materials. China is now California's fourth

largest export market, after Mexico, Canada and Japan. In 2008 California exported US \$10.9 billion (74.5 billion yuan) worth of goods to China, up 40 percent since 2005.

With the California bill in the bag, Fong now plans to take the issue to the US Congress, where he will request an apology for the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Fong does not plan to press for financial compensation for the surviving victims of the state and federal laws in question. More important than individual compensation, he says, is to help educate younger generations about the mistakes of the past.

That said, Fong may ask for funding to help preserve the Angel Island immigration station, dilapidated after decades of neglect. To complicate matters, the station is located within a state park that, along with several others, may be shut down to help balance California's budget shortfall.

(Time magazine)

Background

Chinese Exclusion Act

Passed on May 6, 1882, this was the only US federal law ever enacted to deny immigration based exclusively on race or nationality.

It joined other laws that barred Chinese people from owning land or property, marrying whites, working in the public sector and testifying against whites in court. It was not fully repealed until 1943, after China and the US became allies in World War II.

Analyst

Why California needs to apologize

We didn't know. We weren't part of it.

That's what many newcomers and younger Californians can justly say about the century-long exclusion of the Chinese people from legal immigration, citizenship and ownership of property.

They had no part in making citizenship illegal for Chinese laborers who mined the Mother Lode, worked farms and built the Transcontinental Railroad and levees. And many can honestly say they did not know that noncitizen Asians have been able to own property in California only since 1952.

So why not just let that history go, move on? This is a live question today because California legislators have passed a bipartisan resolution to "express regret for past discriminatory laws." This isn't mere symbolism. The debate itself has been valuable.

The reality is that California and the nation today face heated discussions about immigration, and can learn from Chinese immigrant experience. We need to understand it, confront it and not fall into the same traps that ensnared earlier generations.

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 42 does not call for any specific action as a consequence of this century of exclusion. But it should not be the end of this discussion. California educators should explore including material on the treatment of Chinese people in our students' textbooks, and the state should consider an official memorial that will remind this and future generations of what can happen when bigotry overrides respect for all.

— Adam Ashton, commentator with the *Modesto Bee*, California

Shanghai Expo ditches tobacco sponsorship

Organizers of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo are to return a 200-million-yuan donation from a tobacco company after health experts raised objections to the sponsorship.

Xu Wei, spokesman for the Shanghai World Expo Coordination Bureau, told Xinhua News Agency Wednesday that the bureau annulled the sponsorship contract with the tobacco company and would return the money, although the timing and payment details had yet to be decided.

Xu would not name the company. Asked if it was the Shanghai Tobacco (Group) Corp. (STC), the only known tobacco sponsor of the Expo, Xu declined to comment. STC is also the only company known to have donated at least 200 million yuan.

Xu said the bureau made the decision in order to commit itself to a healthy World Expo at the suggestion earlier this month of a group of about 20 public health experts.

Universities 'fudge' student jobs data

Some Chinese universities have inflated graduate employment figures by issuing bogus work contracts as millions struggle to find work amid the downturn, *China Daily* has reported.

The financial crisis has intensified the problem of graduate unemployment, which stems from rapidly increasing enrolment at universities, many of which fail to adequately train their graduates.

If widespread, this could cast doubt on recent official reports that graduate unemployment has now substantially eased, with an estimated 6.1 million new graduates in the country this year.

Leaders fear widespread disillusionment among youngsters could spark unrest.

China Daily said some universities, particularly second tier ones, had been "faking" work contracts or employment agreements for graduates to fudge employment rates and deliver satisfactory performance reports to officials.

In Internet forums such as Tianya, recent postings by graduates suggest the problem exists all over the country, including provinces such as Guangdong, Hubei, Zhejiang and Shaanxi.

"Faking employment rates is not an isolated case and it has existed for years in China," an unnamed education expert was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

The reputation of Chinese universities is often linked to the ability of their graduates to find work, which may have led second tier schools to falsify their figures, the paper said.

The Ministry of Education said nearly two-thirds of this year's graduates had found jobs by early July, *China Daily* reported. But other research suggests the proportion is far lower. (Agencies)

Why China cannot create global brands

Top firms from the world's factory remain oddly anonymous

Huawei may be the best company you've never heard of, and that's a big problem. Founded in 1988 by a former People's Liberation Army officer with less than 27,000 yuan in startup capital, Huawei has grown from a small importer into a growing giant – revenue rose 43 percent last year to more than 123 billion yuan – now poised to overtake Nokia Siemens as the world's second-largest maker of telecom hardware, after Ericsson.

Even a decade ago, China watchers were touting Huawei as one of the companies most likely to become the country's first big global brand. Its headquarters in booming Shenzhen look like a Silicon Valley transplant, with high-tech laboratories, manicured lawns and staff swimming pools. It made *Business Week's* latest list of the world's 10 "most influential" companies, alongside Apple, Wal-Mart, Toyota and Google. Yet Huawei is by far the least internationally recognizable name on the list.

Outside of China, even staff have trouble pronouncing its name. It should be pronounced "hwa-way," but "people say it in all sorts of ways," says Robert Fox, the chief branding officer of Huawei's wireless-product line.

China is famous as the world's factory, but even its best companies enjoy little if any fame. That paradox has become a vexing problem for leaders.

In a March report, Premier Wen Jiabao called for China to create companies that can innovate and churn out "brand-name export products" – meaning companies with reputations for quality, innovation and service so strong that customers are willing to pay a premium for their products.

The global financial crisis adds urgency to the campaign. During a Guangdong road trip



Huawei is touted as the country's first big global brand, but it remains oddly unknown outside of China.

CFP Photos

in April, Wen called the crisis an opportunity for firms to innovate and expand abroad. The central government has ordered state banks to make billions of dollars in loans available to firms eyeing the global market.

Huawei model

Visit Huawei, however, and you get the sense that none of its executives hears the call. The company has built its success the old-fashioned Chinese way: by selling to other businesses, rather than directly to consumers around the world, and by competing on price rather than on innovation.

While Huawei has invested heavily in research and development and boasts of filing the highest number of patent applications globally last year, much of its "innovation" has gone toward tweaking existing technologies to meet the demands of industrial customers. Two of its most recent products are bulletproof equipment for a Mexican tele-

com operator and gear capable of withstanding Russia's frigid winters, hardly items the average consumer is clamoring for.

Huawei is typical of China, where most multinationals still sell mainly to other businesses.

Building a brand

The simplest explanation for China's failure to build global brands is cutthroat domestic competition. In most product categories, hundreds or thousands of firms compete for domestic market share, leaving profit margins razor thin.

China has 150 firms licensed to make cars and other motorized vehicles, and more than 500 bicycle manufacturers. And because foreign brands have taken much of the market's high end, most companies are forced to compete on cost, leaving little room for investment in R&D or marketing.

The mix of solid engineering and marketing razzle-dazzle that goes into a brand like Google

or Nike is an art, and mastering it still evades China Inc. Buying it at auction has evaded Lenovo and Haier, and likely will fail the latest bidders: Beijing Automotive Industry Group is making a play for GM's Opel line, and Sichuan Tengzhong Heavy Industrial Machinery has reached a tentative agreement to buy Hummer.

This is how the Chinese approach brands – as a fact or skill set to acquire, not an art to master.

Huawei executives say accusations that China could use its equipment to steal sensitive data are ludicrous. But, as every good marketer knows, perceptions matter. If Huawei wants only to cultivate a few hundred elite industry buyers, perhaps it can explain itself to them directly. But if China hopes to build dominant names in the global consumer market, it needs a very different role model. One that has some interest in becoming a famous name.

(*Newsweek Magazine*)

Voice

Culture matters

Chinese firms may remain unknown internationally because of a culture clash. Studies show that China equally emphasizes the business leader and the brand. For example, Zhang Ruimin, central executive officer of Haier, has as much influence as his company. Ren Zhengfei is in the same position at Huawei.

Overseas Chinese entrepreneurs are usually much better known than their enterprises, like business magnate Li Jiacheng. Foreign companies, on the other hand, have brands known world over, but without any nameable entrepreneurs: Coca-Cola and General Motors are good examples of this phenomenon. This difference is due to Chinese culture, which



Huawei is a model among state-owned companies.

emphasizes and admires personality and morals.

– Zhang Weiyang, economic professor, Peking University.

State-owned enterprises large, but immature

Chinese enterprises rushing to the Fortune 500 list are largely backed by the Chinese government. Their success has less to do with competitiveness, management and insight and

more to do with a limitless pocketbook. The government protects these state-owned enterprises from collapse by enlarging their market and eliminating small- and medium-sized rivals. While this may solidify the economy, it also pushes Chinese enterprises into the world's strongest group without any of the tools for the job, which their competitors earned with experience. The government should back small- and medium-size companies to create a challenge for state-owned enterprises which will help them learn to compete when it is time to go into the global market.

– Shen Jiajun, reporter and senior commentator at Communication Information News

Social responsibility should outweigh profits

Social responsibility remains weak because most of the funds come from foreign firms, which act as sponsors at many of the country's national and international events. As the Shanghai World Expo draws close, many are asking whether enterprises from abroad should be allowed to act as sponsors. China is responsible for promoting its enterprises at domestic events to help get their names out into the world. It should not be a time for pure economic pursuits.

– Hou Ruijian, dean of Information Department of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Henan Sub-council
(By Ma Mingxuan)

Opinion

Rich China, poor peasants

The government recently announced the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by more than 7 percent in the first half of this year, putting the country on course to displace Japan as the world's second-largest economy by year's end.

But it's not time to break out the *maotai* just yet. Peasants and migrant workers – 65 percent of the country's 1.3 billion people – are not benefiting much from this growth.

Much of the GDP is hoarded by the central government. Last year, it collected taxation and other levies worth 6 trillion yuan, an eye-popping 4 trillion yuan more than five years ago. Since the turn of the century, funds flowing into the treasury have increased 22 percent year on year, more than double the average 10 percent GDP growth seen in the past two decades.

This would not be a problem if worker incomes were growing in tandem with tax revenues. But according to official statistics, salaries and other worker and peasant incomes fell to less than 42 percent of the GDP in 2006 – the last year when data was available – from 53 percent in 1998.

Salaries are 50 to 60 percent of the GDP in the US and Japan.

A lion's share of the national wealth is being snapped up by about 140 state-owned business groups such as the three oil-and-gas giants, four state-owned banks and similar government monopolies in lucrative sectors such as insurance, energy, mines, telecommunications and transportation. Under the largely nominal control of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, the assets and sales of these behemoths grew each year by an average of 1.5 trillion and 1.3 trillion yuan respectively for the five years prior to 2008.

These firms are heavily supported by the government. State-owned banks issued loans worth US 7.4 trillion yuan in the first half of this year, a figure which exceeds the sum of all 2008 loans. Less than 5 percent of these loans went to small- and medium-sized companies, most of which are privately owned.

Today, the country has around 300,000 super-rich people whose assets are valued at more than 10 million yuan. This wealth has not trickled down at all. Official statistics show peasants are paid only one-third what their urban counterparts are.

Tsinghua University sociologist Sun Liping estimates the standard-of-living discrepancy between cities and the countryside to be about six fold. This is an extreme contrast to the global average of 1.5 fold.

– Willy Lam, professor of Chinese studies at Akita International University, Japan

Sinopec chandelier fuels public anger

By Zhao Hongyi

Sinopec caught the public's ire this week following a number of unpleasant reports about the state-owned oil refining giant.

Over the weekend, news broke that the chandelier adorning the main entrance hall of its renovated headquarters in Beijing cost 12 million yuan.

Two days later, Sinopec said in a statement that the chandelier cost only 1.6 million yuan, "much less than rumored in the total 240-million-yuan renovation expenditure."

Sinopec expected its statement to clarify the facts, extinguish rumors and calm down the enraged public and domestic media. But it got the opposite result: People began seeking more information on the renovation work and are demanding transparency in the inquiry.

They said spending 240 million yuan to renovate an already impressive building is impractical in the current economic climate, and that the state-owned enterprise should not be taking advantage of high oil prices and wasting money on unnecessary decorations.

On Tuesday, former Sinopec

president and chairman Chen Tonghai was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve for receiving nearly 200 million yuan in bribes. Chen is said to have received the money between 1998 and 2007 as head of Asia's largest oil refinery by volume. The company recorded a sales volume of 1 trillion yuan in 2006.

Chen's sentence provoked grumbling among the public. Many believed it was too light compared with Li Peiying, former chairman of the Capital International Airport, who was sentenced to death without reprieve this week for pocketing 82.5 million yuan and receiving another 26.6 million yuan in bribes. Reports said Chen, the son of a communist revolutionary, had been "taken care of by his uncles and aunts."

But the public's biggest concern is how to limit the powers of state-owned firms' top officials, and how to create a corporate structure that would be accountable to society. Some said the best way to battle graft and corruption is to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place. The biggest question is how to translate this into action.

Expert's view

People understand the links between corporate structure and corruption: that a good structure can prevent corruption and bribery. Otherwise, no matter how many wrongdoings we expose and how many corrupt officials we kill, we will not be able to completely eradicate graft and corruption.

In China, most state-owned giants have multiple functions: to protect and control key national resources, to ensure the growth of state-owned assets under their wing, to distribute social resources and to manage conflicts between competing parties. All these functions create a huge space and opportunities for corruption and bribery.

Therefore, we should set up a corporate structure in state-owned enterprises that is different from other countries'. This

involves carefully choosing top officials; "official businessmen" are much more dangerous than ordinary corrupt officials.

In Sinopec's case, if it had a good framework and system with which to supervise its officials, Chen's crime would not have happened in the first place. This is the way we could have prevented the waste and loss of state assets, and kept away Chen and Li from the death penalty.

Interestingly, each year, Sinopec asks the central government for billions of yuan in subsidies. It also takes advantage of its monopoly within the oil industry to constantly raise gas prices at home with the justification of "bridging the price gap between China and the rest of the world." How ugly its face is!

— Zhang Tianwei, news commentator



The controversial chandelier that enrages the public. CFP Photos



Chen Tonghai

Comment

Chen received 195 million yuan in bribes, which makes it easy for us to calculate the loss his crimes have caused. Chen was a dictator in "his enterprise" as he called it, throwing away more than 40,000 yuan on average each day – comparable to another sacked official, Wang Xuebing, the former governor of the Construction Bank of China.

As the No. 1 man in Sinopec, Chen gave many speeches on how to combat bribery and corruption throughout his 10 years in office, especially in 2005 and 2006, two years before he was investigated. How ironic!

— Deng Yuwen, news commentator for ifeng.com

The efficiency of state-owned enterprises is another issue. On the Fortune 500 list, Sinopec climbed from 16th place in 2007 to 9th in 2008, which is very striking. But it is another story if we put it in a global context.

(The US's) Exxon Mobile has a global reach twice that of Sinopec, and global profits 23 times Sinopec's. Exxon's staff is only 12 percent of Sinopec's, but its average income per head is 17 times larger, its profit per head is 182 times more. These figures show the low efficiency of a state-owned enterprise.

— ZTW, netizen

China has more than 100,000 state-owned enterprises. Most of

them are facing problems such as high operating cost, overextended business scope, and loss and waste. We need to put eyes on these blind corners of our economy.

Most of them have established a good internal framework such as a "modern management system," but because of tradition, the post of chairman, president and general manager are often still held by the same person. This is a loophole.

Chen's case has renewed work on the "position-responsibility" legal system we proposed many years ago. We hope this will be a good start.

— Ren Jianmin, director of the Research Center for Clean Politics and Governance

Debate of the week

Villagers flee county in radiation scare

They fled in droves, terrified by rumors of a radiation leak, with many jumping empty-handed into motorcycle taxis and farm trucks they hoped would take them out of harm's way.

While most of the residents of Henan province's Qi county had returned by Monday amid government assurances it was safe, last week's mass exodus – some residents estimated that hundreds of thousands left – illustrates how quickly rumors can spread and cause alarm in China.

The unease began last Friday, when bystanders saw government workers at a factory using robots to examine a cobalt-60 irradiator that had malfunctioned. The machine is used mainly for sterilizing pepper powder, a flavoring used in instant noodles and garlic.

Within hours, alarm spread as people began hearing word that explosions occurred at the irradiation plant.

"There was chaos on the streets from about 2:30 p.m. until dark," said Zhu Zhihai, manager of a garlic-processing factory where all 30 employees rushed away. "All kinds of vehicles were going out of the county – farm vehicles, motorcycles and cars. People were in a hurry and they didn't take anything with them."

Zhu, who estimated that about a third of the county's 1 million people fled, said he didn't leave because his friends at the local environmental protection bureau told him there had not been a disaster.

An official at the Qi county government office said only "a small portion of people left" and refused to give his name or any other details.

A worker at Zhu's garlic factory who would only give his surname, Liu, said when he asked people why they were running, they told him that explosions had occurred at the factory with radiation equipment.

"People were saying 'If you are too slow, you will die,'" said Liu, who jumped on his motorized bike and began making his way to his house 10 kilometers outside the county with his wife and two children. "The road were filled with vehicles. Other people were on their bikes with their families or carrying sheep and pigs."

Some went as far as the capital city of Zhengzhou, about 100 kilometers away and although most had returned by Monday, some parents were keeping their children away for a few more weeks.

(Agencies)

Shoe designer Jimmy Choo turns eyes to education



Jimmy Choo's current dream is to design and make a pair of shoes for the wife of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. CFP Photo

By Han Manman

Malaysian-born luxury shoemaker Jimmy Choo has turned his eyes to education after creating an indelible imprint on the fashion world. He is planning a network of "couture shoe academies" worldwide, with the first likely to open in his home country.

The Jimmy Choo name immediately evokes the image of stylish, elegantly crafted shoes. The UK-based brand was brought into the spotlight by the hit US television series "Sex and the City", in which Carrie Bradshaw (played by Sarah Jessica Parker) adores Jimmy Choo footwear.

The shoes have also been seen on the feet of high-profile figures such as the late Diana, Princess of Wales; Beyonce, who made a song about it; and Madonna, who wore it on her wedding to Guy Ritchie.

But design business is not the end for Choo, the 48-year old wants to impart his skills to the young through formal education.

"Once it is established, the academy can be licensed all over the world through the Jimmy Choo label," he said during a recent visit to Beijing. He was one of the eight "British top celebrity innovators" invited by the British Embassy to share his success story with Chinese students.

"The academy must set a very high standard, and 'good character' is the top consideration when choosing our students," the designer said.

Choo told his audience one of the keys to success is the hunger for knowledge, no matter how old a person gets. "To be a good designer, you should be eager to learn new things, to enrich yourself and to look ahead," he said.

Choo, whose business motto is "It doesn't matter what you are wearing if you have good shoes and a good bag," said men also have the right to wear high heels.



Jimmy Choo shoes have been seen on the feet of many high-profile international figures.

"I sometimes wear high-heeled shoes to parties, but I will also wear longer trousers to hide the heel. British girls are too tall!" he said.

Born in 1961 into a Chinese family of shoemakers in Penang, Malaysia, Choo became his parents' apprentice when he was 9. He was fascinated with the business and designed his first pair at age 11.

In the early 1980s, he moved to London where he studied fashion design with a focus on shoemaking. He worked part-time as a shoe factory cleaner to help fund his UK education.

International fame came when his creations were featured in eight pages of a 1988 issue of *Vogue* magazine. "If you get into *Vogue*, you can get into any magazine. I worked hard but I was also very lucky that *Vogue* asked to feature my shoes," Choo said.

Now a British citizen, Choo confines himself to custom-made couture

designs, having sold his ready-to-wear business to former *Vogue* editor Tamara Mellon.

Princess Diana's endorsement also helped his brand become a celebrity favorite. "When she first came to me, she was very simple. She said to me, 'Jimmy, remember I don't want high-heeled shoes, so don't give me four-inch heels.' I said, 'Why do you want low-heeled shoes?' and she said, 'Because Charles is not that tall.'" Choo said that after Diana and Charles divorced, she asked for higher-heeled shoes.

Choo said he is proud that US first lady Michelle Obama wore a pair of Jimmy Choos to the inaugural ball. But he said his biggest dream is "to design and make a pair of shoes for the wife of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao," this from the designer who has not made a pair with his own hands in over 10 years.

Award-winning US magician casts spell on Beijing

By Ma Mingxuan

Award-winning US magician Arthur Trace has been casting a spell around town ahead of the World Championships of Magic to be held here from Sunday to July 31.

Trace hopelessly fell in love with magic at age eight after seeing it performed on TV. He taught himself the craft using books borrowed from the library, and it soon became clear he had an extraordinary gift.

In 2002, he began preparing original tricks for the World Championships of Magic to be held four years later in Stockholm, Sweden. At the triennial extravaganza, he wowed spectators and bagged an award by turning a two-dimensional, black-and-white abstract painting into a three-dimensional, colored object.

The win brought him fame in the world of magic, and proved why he was earlier given the International Brotherhood of Magicians' Gold Medal International Award of Excellence.

Trace however would prefer to be known as an "entertainer" rather than as a "master of magic." He said it is seeing the amazement and pleasure on his audiences' face that gives him satisfaction.

The Chicago-based magician said he felt like he achieved something momentous during a visit to a retirement home. He performed for 80- to 90-year-old residents whose daily life was characterized by routine. "They had nothing to look forward to," Trace said. "But when I was performing, they all became excited and I felt really satisfied."

Trace spends a lot of time coming up with new tricks, and creates his tools himself. If he learns a trick from someone else, he makes sure he adapts them to be, closer to people's experiences in daily life.

A magician's gadgets and the stage's music and lighting work together to create a show's impact. Trace uses a bottle, napkins, a paper rose and the noise of buzzing bees to perform a trick of trapping bees in a bottle. Though no bees actually appear on stage, the viewers do not know any better.

Trace has been doing a series of shows in Goose and Duck magic club in Chaoyang District since early July and says Chinese audiences are not easy to please. "Chinese people are interactive, but I find them more of a challenge than those in the West," he said, explaining that locals are more skeptical and always want to discover the key to every trick – a headache for magicians.

For his Beijing performances, Trace made his tricks much more visual because of the language barrier. He also made full use of his repertoire involving copper coins and chopsticks.

This is Trace's first trip to mainland China, and the first time the World Championships of Magic is going to be held outside Europe. "It will be a great competition and all the participants will be amazing," he said.

The five-day event at the National Convention Center is the world's biggest gathering of magicians and is expected to draw 2,400 participants. It will feature some of the world's most famous magicians, including Jeff McBride, Henry Evans and Victor Voito.



Arthur Trace shows his magic to an audience member. Photo by Ma Mingxuan



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Thousands of dollars awarded to three student teams

By Feng Qian

An international leadership program awarded three Chinese student teams tens of thousands of yuan to conduct nature conservation studies. The Conservation Leadership Programme's (CLP) grants were presented in Beijing this week at an annual meeting of biodiversity professionals.

"The CLP aims to help young leaders in developing countries in biodiversity conservation. Each year we give as much as US \$12,500 (85,000 yuan) to each winning team," said Robyn Dalzen, the executive manager of CLP, a partnership of five organizations that helps develop leaders in biodiversity conservation.

The three winning projects were the following: "Potential Threat Assessment and Conservation of Sclater's Monal at Mt. Gaoligong," "Freshwater Turtle Conservation in the Nanling Nature Reserve, Guangdong Province" and "Study of the Influence of Fencing on Przewalski's Gazelle in Qinghai Province."

Aside from providing funding, CLP will provide training and mentoring to the awardees, said Dalzen, who has been with CLP for six years.



One of the teams is studying endangered bird species in Sichuan Province.

Photo provided by Wang Jie

Wang Jie, a 2007 winner for the "Assessment and Conservation of Threatened Bird Species at Laojunshan Mountain, Sichuan Province," said the scheme honed his teamwork and management skills. "My team now has stronger and more diverse abilities that help us do conservation work

more effectively," he said.

Wang said CLP assisted not only in research but also in publicizing conservation in China, a campaign of which an increasing number of people are aware.

Dalzen said she was really impressed with the students' commitment, hard work and

teamwork.

Zhang Shan, a graduate of Peking University, went without food for two days while he was studying rare birds in Qinghai Province. Aside from the lack of food supply, working conditions in the place were tough yet Zhang did not abandon his project, Dalzen said.

Dance for rain and money

By Annie Wei

From late Saturday until early Sunday, a 500-year-old restored courtyard temple near the Drum and Bell Tower played host to people who danced to beg the heavens for rain.

Desert Dance, organized by Greening the Beige community, sought to draw attention to the fact that next year, Beijing's population is expected to reach 17 million – and will bring to a criti-

cal stage the capital's water shortage. Before modern man invented cloud seeding to induce rain, ancient people stomped their feet and clapped their hands to pray for rain.

Water shortage is also a concern because of desertification, which is reducing the productivity of Beijing's soil.

The event at Hong'enguan temple last weekend was at the same time a fundraiser for Burn-

ers Without Borders (BWB), an international grassroots group that "addresses gaping needs where cultural and societal systems are failing," its Web site says.

While Desert Dance was happening, BWB communities in six US and Canadian cities also gathered to raise money for their education campaigns and community projects.

Greening the Beige, one of BWB's local partners, is composed

of several expats in Beijing and works to raise awareness for environmental issues. Carissa Welton, its founder and program director from the US, has organized and hosted art and music events in town over the last two years.

Aside from dancing, Desert Dance featured discussions on desertification, musical performances and film screenings. There was also a silent auction for all photographs on display that evening.

Event

Lotus Pond Folk Music Boat Tour

Get out of the city and immerse yourself in Chinese folk music and history on this boat tour. Participants will be serenaded by folk musicians while floating on a lake decorated with Chinese lanterns, on a lake with lilies and bamboo.

Where: China Culture Center, Kent Center, 23 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: July 25, 7:30-10:30 pm

Tel: 6432 9341

Cost: 280 yuan

Country Fine Dining

Enjoy a country dinner right under the Great Wall, featuring Chef Randhir's fusion menu of fresh seasonal ingredients. Diners can look forward to crisp linens, singing wine glasses, fresh flowers and lots of dancing by candlelight.

Where: Schoolhouse Canteen, 12 Mutianyu Village, Huairou District

When: July 25, 6-8 pm

Tel: 6162 6506

Beijing Childhood in a Hutong

This summer program, run by Ivy Bilingual School, shows children what it was like growing up in old Beijing. Participants engage in various fun-filled themed activities such as hopscotch, hoop running and pellet shooting.

Ivy Bilingual School is a popular kindergarden in town open to both Chinese and foreign children.

Where: Ivy School, 18 Xinjin Lu, Cuigexiang, Chaoyang District

When: July 23, 9 am – July 31, 3:30 pm

Tel: 8439 7080

(By Chen Zao)

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Customized painting for cars or motorcycles

By Venus Lee

David Brent, 27, has wanted to repaint his car since March.

The Australian music composer was inspired by the trendy hand-painted cars and motorcycles he saw at this year's Beijing International Motor Show, but could not find the right shop for the job.

Customized vehicle painting is a new concept in Beijing but it might catch on. Zhou Liqiang, chief painter at Zuo'an Car Painting Studio, said business has improved in the last few years. "Although we've only been around for three to four years, we're developing fast."

This trend owes to a number of factors. Car and motorcycle numbers are on the rise, drivers are becoming more conscious of their ride's look and people want to express their individuality and fashion sense through their vehicles.

But the price of the painting service might squelch several months' salary. "Car painting is about 2,000 yuan per square meter; 8,000 yuan for the whole

body. Motorcycle paintings cost about 4,000 yuan for the whole body," Zhou said. Painting usually takes three to five days.

Zhou said most customers are young, from 24 to 32 years old. "Heavy metal and death are our Western customers' favorite subjects. So they usually want raging fires, skulls and science fiction characters. Chinese customers prefer more traditional images like blue and white porcelain, dragons, tigers or cartoon figures," he said. "All the paintings are hand-drawn, so each is unique."

Cui Yuqing, the deputy director of the municipal vehicle administration office of the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau, reminded the public that some images are hands-off. "Patterns similar to police symbols are banned according to the 'Regulations on Motorized Vehicle Registration,'" he said.

Cui said people who get their vehicle repainted need to inform his office within 10 days.



Staff at Zuo'an Car Studio painting a jeep

Photo provided by Zhang Ting

Zuoan Car Painting Studio

Where: Dongfangmeidu Automobile Fitting Market, Qinghe Xiaoying, Haidian District
Tel: 6293 0856

Dongning Car Painting Center

Where: 8329A, B3, Oriental Plaza,

Dongcheng District

Tel: 6640 7900

Huapi Car Painting Studio

Where: A1-232, Yasen Auto Accessories Market, Haidian District

Tel: 8845 1664; 8383 3679

In the mood for rock climbing

By Annie Wei

If you've always wanted to try rock climbing, there is no better season to do it than in summer. Below is a list of this season's rock climbing activities in the outskirts. Those who do not want to stray too far from urban comforts can hit places around town.

Weekend rock climbing at Baihe

Everyone knows that the country's best rock climbing sites can be found in Yangshuo, Guangxi Province. However, travelers will have to spend at least 3,000 yuan on a trip to the southern county.

A cheaper, nearer alternative is being offered by a group of local rock climbers. They are organizing a two-day trip to Baihe for beginners, so the route should be manageable. Participants should bring their own climbing shoes, safety belt, protective gear and lock, climbing chalk, a fast-drying outfit, sunscreen, 2 liters of water and bug spray.

Participants will spend the night in a local farm house, but

each person is responsible for his or her lunch during the two days' climb.

Where: Meet at stop for Bus 980 on Dongzhimen

When: July 25, 7 am

Cost: 150 yuan

Touchstore

Ritan Park used to be the only place in town with a rock climbing wall. Now that it has some competition, it has expanded its wall and added more climbing routes.

The park provides all the equipment from ropes to climbing shoes. Its very busy on weekends, but the staff is always friendly and helpful.

Where: 6 Ritan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

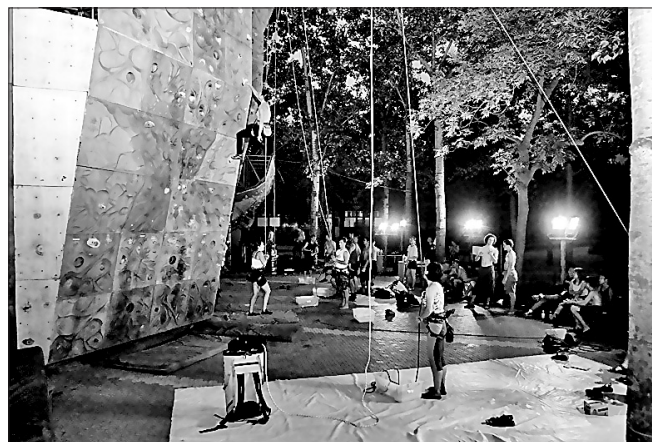
When: Daily, 10 am - 9:30 pm

Cost: 25 yuan for one climb or 50 yuan for a day of unlimited climbing; 1,500 yuan for a year's membership

Tel: 8561 6301

Ice-climbing at the mall

Although winter is long past and we're in the middle of Beijing, The North Face sporting



Rock-climbing wall at Ritan Park is a popular spot even at night.

CFP Photo

goods has created an opportunity for city-dwellers to experience ice climbing.

It built an ice-climbing "experience room" in its store at The Village and has invited Sun Bin, coach of the national ice-climbing team, to provide free training for six hours on Sunday.

Participants should register

ahead and pay 10 yuan for insurance at the store.

Where: The North Face, The Village, 39 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: July 26, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm; 2-4 pm; 4-6 pm (only 10 people allowed per session; register before July 24, 5 pm)

Tel: 6417 3290

Panjiayuan opens barter market next month

By Zhao Hongyi

Panjiayuan Antique Market has made room for a Summer Antiques and Accessories barter market to open August 6.

The new market, open from Monday to Friday, is expected to have around 300 stalls. Stalls will be available to vendors for free every Thursday, said Huang Ling, manager of the barter market.

"We'd like to call it an open-air bazaar or a flea market," said Huang, who is also an official with the Panjiayuan International

Folklores Exchanges. "We welcome expats to sell their things and to promote the exchange of wares, concepts and cultures."

Items available for barter include old household items such as kitchenware. Every booth should not exceed 1 square meters, the market's regulations say.

Panjiayuan set up the barter market in response to the municipal government's call for projects to stimulate the domestic economy. It also hopes to prolong the life of used goods and encourage the use

of second-hand items in view of environmental protection.

"It's a rare chance for expats to meet and trade with locals," Huang said. She said organizers do not know if they will reopen the barter market next year.

Wang Junqing, an official with Beijing's bureau of commerce, said the municipal government is hoping to make this a regular event. "We will try to open more flea markets when time is right," she said.

Twenty-year-old Panjiayuan is

the country's most popular antique market for tourists and foreigners. The market plans to expand its area to create more business. In the meantime, it regularly organizes special-themed events to attract new vendors and customers.

For more information on the barter market, call 6776 4863 or visit panjiayuan.com for information in English.

How to get there: Take a bus on the East Third Ring Road heading south such as Bus 300.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I have a disabled friend coming to Beijing and I want to take her to some parks. Are there parks free for disabled people?

Beijing has 23 parks that do not charge admission for disabled visitors. For example:

Beijing Aquarium

Where: 18 Gaoliangqiao

Xiejie, Haidian District

Open: 9 am - 5 pm

Tel: 6217 6655

I just moved to Beijing and I'm looking for organic food. Can you recommend any stores?

Organic Farm stocks a variety of organic goods.

Where: 1/F Palm Spring Plaza, Chaoyang Park South Gate, Chaoyang District

Open: Daily, 9 am - 10 pm

Tel: 6539 7462

Lohao City Organic Shop sells yogurt, bread and fruit juice. Prices at the store are more affordable compared to other organic food stores in town.

Where: 29 Lucky Street, Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Daily 9 am - 10 pm

Tel: 5867 0265

I like to try different kinds of cheese, but the selection in most supermarkets is limited. Any suggestion?

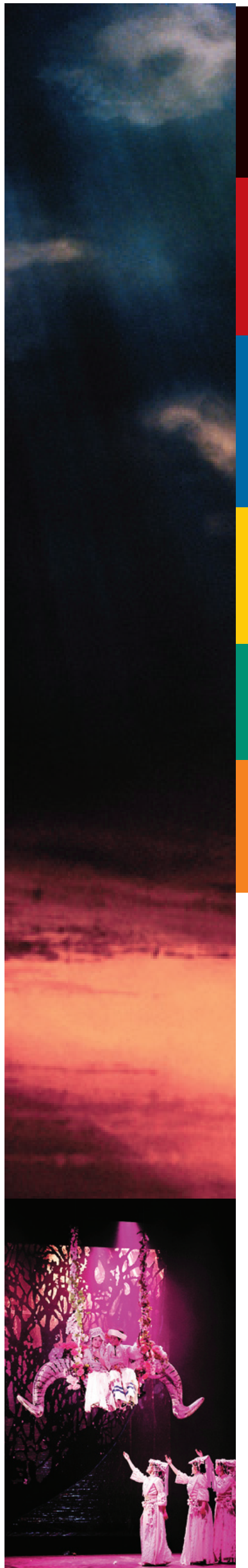
Try Scarlett, a bar that offers a plate of eight cheeses (168 yuan) enough for several friends to share.

Where: Hotel G, 7A Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 6 pm - 3 am

Tel: 6552 2880

(By Chen Zao)



Threatened culture survives quake in dance

By He Jianwei

Dozens of ethnic Qiang poets were buried by the magnitude-8 Wenchuan earthquake at 2:28 pm last May 12 while reciting poems at the Qiang Minority Group Museum in Sichuan Province. Over 30,000 Qiang people – 10 percent of the group's population – perished in the quake.

The six Qiang items in China's intangible cultural heritage include the ethnic group's dances and songs. To preserve the minority group's 3,000-year culture, Qiang artists have created a song-and-dance drama to present their rich and precious culture. The performance debuted on the anniversary of the earthquake in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. It will come to Beijing's stage early next month.

Both men and women wore white, flax gowns under their sheepskin vests at the Poly Theater last Thursday. Women wore an embroidered black headscarf and men tied a black kerchief around their head.

They opened up a jar of liquor made from highland barley and wheat, and people squatted to take turns sipping it through a bamboo straw.

The artists performed a goatskin drum dance and sang traditional songs at the press release for their new "Wind of Qiang."

The group has a history of at least 3,000 years, with early inscriptions on tortoise shells telling of how active the Qiang were in the northwest and central plains during Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century BC). Toward 300 BC, many Qiang began to move southwest and northwest.

Qiang people have their own spoken language but use Chinese characters for writing. Their songs, dances and poems are passed down by word of mouth.

The "Wind of Qiang" starts with two goat horns played in a matched pair. In Qiang custom, each man and woman holds a goat horn. If the horns match, they will become a couple.

The performance is an epic telling the birth of Qiang people and how they conquered the difficulties when their ancestors migrated to their current residence. "In last year's massive earthquake, 30,000 Qiang people perished. Now we want to tell everyone that we can overcome this just as our ancestors did," says Cao Ping, the director.

The performance displays Qiang's six items on the list of national intangible cultural heritage, including architecture, music, dance, handicraft and traditional festival.

The Qiang traditionally lived in diaolou, a kind of multi-story fortified tower made of stone. The diaolou date back at least 2,000 years, and during that time served as family housing and watchtowers' archery towers.

Most diaolou are between three and 11 stories. The first floor is usually reserved for raising poultry. The second floor is the bedroom and the third and higher floors are used for storage and defense. The earthquake damaged the walls of only a few diaolou.

"Although we can't build a diaolou on stage, construction will be an important element in the scenes," Cao says.

The Qiang have two unique instruments: the Qiang flute and goatskin drum. The Qiang flute sounds enchanting and soul-stirring, like something played by ancient warring tribes.

The flute is made using two bamboo pipes bound by string. It usually used to play one of 10 ancient solos. The sound of the flute represents homesickness and yearning.

Another instrument developed into a kind of dance. The goatskin drum dance is a ritual for local people to show their respect for nature and to communicate with the gods.

The dancers are called Shi Bi or Duan Gong, clerics in the Qiang religion. "A key part of Qiang identity is the Shi Bi culture. Qiang language is verbal and does not use writing, so traditional beliefs, history, astronomy, calendar systems and arts are passed on by Shi Bi," he says.

The other heritage is Qiang embroidery. Most Chinese embroidery uses silk threads, but the Qiang work with cotton. The actors were embroidering even during the press conference. "Embroidery is part of the Qiang woman's life. All the costumes used by the performers

were embroidered by the women," he says.

May 5 of the lunar calendar is Wa'er Eze Festival, a veneration of Shalang Sister, the goddess of song and dance. During the festival, everyone follows a mother's brother to sacrifice a goat. The women pray and direct a song and dance.

Because women occupy most of the group's main roles, locals call it the Women's Festival. "It is highly valuable in the study of Qiang culture and customs," Wang Jingquan, the artistic director, says. He has studied Qiang music for 30 years.

Wang also worked to introduce Qiang songs to the public. In 1984, China began a project to collect the folk songs of minority groups. Wang oversaw and edited the contributions from Sichuan Province.

"Brother of Bi Man," king of Qiang music, was Wang's discovery. "Most Qiang songs have multiple voices and need two or more singers," Wang says.

Ren Qing and his brother-in-law Ge Luo founded the duet "Brother of Bi Man" together. Music is one of the only amusements in the remote village. "Ren and his ancestors sang to the mountain every day and never thought their voices would be heard by the outside world," he says.

Ren's father was the last king of Qiang music. When Wang lived in Ren's house 25 years ago, the father took time off from working in the field to sing wine songs for him. "When I heard his voice, I was sure I had found [the king]," Wang says.

He encouraged Ren to study hard and promised to bring him to the capital Chengdu. Wang made good on his promise in 2006 when he invited Ren and Ge to attend the Young Singers Competition on CCTV.

In their village, they always sing while drinking. Since it was not possible for him to drink during the performance, Wang suggested they do it backstage. Ren and Ge showed up with two bottles.

"We were so drunk that day that we forgot it was a competition. I thought we were still herding sheep in our village," Ren says.

But their voices floored the judges, and the pair came in third place.

Two years later, Qiang folk song became listed as an intangible culture heritage. Their duet played a huge role in spreading

Qiang culture.

"I worry because there are few people able to sing multi-voice folk songs," Ren says. He is 37 and can sing more than 70 songs. In his generation, only 20 percent of the people can sing multi-voice songs, and can only pass on the solos they learned by oral instruction.

Although the earthquake was a great loss for their hometown, they believe it is a chance to revive their culture.

"Our houses can be destroyed, but our culture and spirit cannot," Ren says.

"We were so drunk that day that we forgot it was a competition. I thought we were still herding sheep in our village."

"Our houses can be destroyed, but our culture and spirit cannot."



The Qiang traditionally lived in diaolou, a tilted house, which dates back at least 2,000 years.

Photos provided by Wind of Qiang

Wind of Qiang

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen
Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: August 5-10, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-1,280 yuan

Tel: 5165 5005

Tapestry of history through a foreigner's eyes

By Zhang Dongya

Sometimes, old books tell today's story the best.

Graham Earnshaw, 57, Earnshaw Books in Hong Kong in 2007 to publish a wide variety of books about Chinese history and culture in English, especially to reprint quality books from China's past.

They are mostly books by foreigners who lived in China from the 19th century through the first half of the 20th century. Each is both entertaining and enlightening, throwing a new light on the history of China and life in the country today.

Most of the books are dug out from old libraries, dusted off and given a chance to face modern readers, with a new foreword and sometimes a new cover – all designed by Earnshaw Books.

Beijing Today (BT): How did you get the idea to reprint old books?

Graham Earnshaw (GE): I have always been interested in history and have been fascinated with China since I moved to Hong Kong in the early 1970s. That was when I started to learn to speak and read Chinese. When I moved to Shanghai in 1995, I set up the Web site talesofoldchina.com, which is the heart of Earnshaw Books.

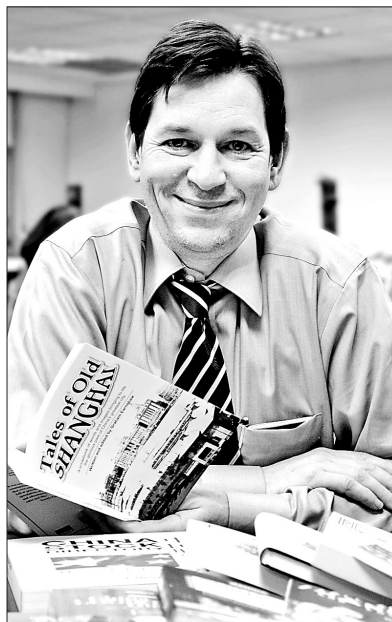
I do not know much about Chinese history overall, but I am particularly interested in what I call the "clash of arrogances," the disconnection between the great cultures of China and the West, that in some ways we are still dealing with today.

BT: What does the "clash of arrogances" refer to?

GE: In the 18th and 19th centuries, I would say both the Western and Chinese cultures were arrogant: both were convinced they were superior. Of course, they both had strengths and weaknesses. But the wars and other unpleasantness in those years were largely a result of stubbornness and a refusal to grant respect to a culture that was different. I call it "a clash of arrogances."

BT: How do you find books on old China? And how do you find proper words to write new forewords?

GE: Many of the old books we reprint are books I have on my



Graham Earnshaw

own bookshelf or that I borrowed from fellow fanatics. People who are interested in these kinds of books all have their own favorites, and we are grateful to people like Paul French, Tess Johnston, Lynn Pan and Peter Hibbard for their suggestions and guidance.

We include a new foreword in each of the reprint to provide context and explain why we believe this book is worth reading, its significance and historical context. We choose people who are both experts and articulate on the topic to write the forewords, and I think they really enhance the value and reading experience.

BT: What kinds of books will be finally selected? Why?

GE: We choose books we personally believe are really good to read. Books which are written very much from the perspective of a certain moment in time ceased to be interesting once the moment is past. But another interesting phenomenon is that the best writing from those days is just as readable and interesting today as it was then. The ones we republish are books we believe will be both entertaining and enlightening. They illuminate the history of China and our lives in China today.

BT: "Old China" in your books is usually old Beijing or old Shanghai. Are any other cities covered in your series?

GE: Our bestselling books are the two Tales books – *Tales of Old Shanghai* and *Tales of Old Peking*. These books follow an unusual scrapbook formula which people seem to like and we are planning more books in the series, including Hong Kong, Chongqing and Suzhou.

Foreigners lived in many cities in China in the past. There were traders, missionaries, teachers and ruffians in all the coastal cities and in the towns of the northeast, in Sichuan, and in all the towns along the Yangtze River, as well as places like Kunming, Yunnan Province. Basically everywhere. Their numbers were not great, not as many as today. But they played a small role, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, in the great and rich story of how China changed from what it was to what it is today.

BT: What about readers' responses to these reprints?

GE: We have received encouraging comments from both Chinese and foreign readers. But one common response is how surprised people are about how much has remained the same over the past 100 years and more, in terms of Chinese personality, society and culture, and in terms of the reaction of foreigners to living in China – the joys and frustrations of it.

BT: Any new plans about your "China Classic Series"?

GE: Earnshaw Books is shifting its focus to publishing more original books next year. Last month, we published *Shanghai Story Walks* by Yvette Ho Madany, which was the first new book we have published written by a Chinese author. It is a unique view of Shanghai and its past, written from a Chinese perspective, and it deserves to do well. It is a very useful and readable guide to parts of the city.

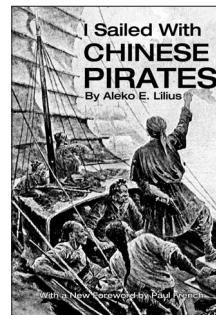
Earnshaw Books book listing

Earnshaw Books recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers. Find them at the Bookworm, Chaterhouse or earnshawbooks.com.

I Sailed With Chinese Pirates

By Aleko E. Lilius, 256pp, Earnshaw Books, 140 yuan

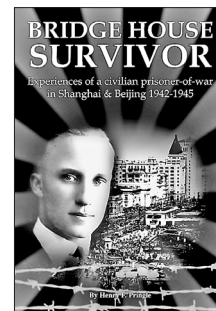
It is 1930 and piracy is rampant on the South China seas. Murderous bands of cutthroats roam the Pearl River Delta and coastal shipping routes, an ever-present menace to the trade of Hong Kong. Globetrotting journalist Aleko E. Lilius sets out to infiltrate these mysterious pirate gangs and is eventually taken into the confidence of South China's notorious pirate queen, Lai Choi San. Lilius lives, eats, sleeps and sails with the pirates, witnessing their harrowing misdeeds and delivering a sensational, rollicking tale of adventure.



Bridge House Survivor

By Henry F. Pringle, 166pp, Earnshaw Books, 175 yuan

In this never-before-seen account, Pringle takes us inside the engine room of Imperial Japanese terror – Bridge House Prison – and the prison camps at Haiphong Road in Shanghai and Fengtai near Beijing, bringing to life the tragedy and courage he saw in humanity's darkest hour. He also included a description of his hazardous return trip to Shanghai from Beijing during the chaotic months that followed the end of hostilities in August 1945.



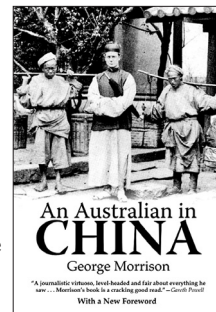
An Australian in China

By George Ernest Morrison, 300pp, Earnshaw Books, 175 yuan

Australian-born correspondent George Ernest Morrison (1862-1920)

became a legend in his lifetime for his brilliant dispatches from Beijing, published in the *Times*, and for his unique influence on the course of Chinese diplomacy. When Morrison first arrived in China in 1894, he set out on what he described as "a quiet journey across China to Burma." Dressed Chinese and engaging guides and servants as needed, he traveled by riverboat, sedan chair, mule, pony, and mostly on foot. In this book, Morrison describes his journey with the same vivid and precise vision that would later make him world-famous.

(By Zhang Dongya)



Finding the extraordinary in the trivial

By He Jianwei

"Love, lust, life and death are nothing but trivial matters," Pang Ho-Cheung said in his strong Hong Kong accent last Friday when he released his book on the Chinese mainland.

To readers here, the 35-year-old in his baseball cap and sunglasses is better known as a film director than a novelist. Pang is one of the most promising young directors in Hong Kong. His black humor movies are highly praised by both critics and theatergoers.

But Pang loves writing more. "I feel free when I am working on a novel. I can write anything I want. As a director, everything has to be team work. I have to consider other people's ideas," he said.

Trivial Matters (192pp, International Culture Press, 22 yuan) is a collection of 18 stories – some sad, others sardonic – with little in common other than a concern with the small things and the throwaway attitude typical of its author.

Pang discusses relationships between men and women in 18 anecdotal and independent stories. Lovers split for absurd reasons. Because of her boyfriend's dialect, a



woman mistakes the "poetry" for "faces." A pissed off office worker fights a taxi driver who shortchanges him after breaking up with his lover. A man helps a prostitute recharge her cell phone after service and ends up falling in love with her.

Trivial and important come in pairs in this book. Every trivial matter reflects the dif-

ficulties of dealing with human relationships. Love, lust, life and death also look like trivial matters in the long history of human beings.

Most of the stories are from Pang and his friends' experience. He grew up in a family of boys. "I found it difficult to face relationships with the girls when I was a teenager," he said.

Once a girl invited him to watch *Home Alone* over his pager, an old telecommunications device that worked like a one-way SMS. When Pang received the message, the name of the film was translated into Cantonese as "I felt lonely at home."

"After I received her message, I ran to her house as quick as possible. I felt embarrassed when I found out it was a misunderstanding," he said.

That event became one of the stories in his new book. "Although it seems silly, it still became a sweet memory," he said.

Over the last 16 years, Pang learned that his real reason for writing was to find safety. "I felt anxiety about dealing with human relationships, so I often feel insecure. Writing is an outlet for that anxiety," he said.

By Wang Yu

Once a vehicle that cannot keep pace with its modern counterparts has only two options: to be abandoned in the dark corner of a garage or babied as a symbol of classic fashion.

It has been 60 years since Vespa released the first version of its iconic scooter, now a much sought-after treasure of local motorheads.

Mod style has had a big impact on Chinese youth fashion: Ray-Ban sunglasses, slim suits and 1960s albums are top sellers at the country's second-hand stores. But Vespa is different. Its scooters are sought after not for their vintage appeal, but for the stories in the trunk.

Mod wave revives a classic ride

From Italian aesthetics

It was noon, April 23, 1946, at the central office for inventions, models and makes of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Florence when motor manufacturer Piaggio filed its patent for a "Motorcycle of a rational complexity of organs and elements combined with a frame with mudguards and a casing covering all mechanical parts."

It was the beginning of the Vespa.

The first prototype was given the initials MP5, and its successor the MP6 was shown to Enrico Piaggio, son of Piaggio founder Rinaldo Piaggio. The entrepreneur heard the buzzing sound of the engine and shouted "Sembra una vespa!" (It resembles a wasp!) The name stuck.

The inspiration for the design dates back to pre-World War II Cushman scooters made for US military use during the war in Europe. The bikes have rigid rear suspension and small 8-inch wheels that allowed a compact design and plenty of room for the rider's legs.

The round headlight was another distinguishing feature: fans call it "the eye." The scooter is easy for both men and women to drive, and its shields keep the rider dry and clean – something important when you are a Mod in a fine French suit.

Piaggio was also an aircraft manufacturer, and the design of planes at the time contributed to the Vespa's unique look. "For modern fans, I think the scooter has a vintage technical design which suits their taste in machinery and style," says Miumiu Wang, a Vespa fan in Beijing.

As in Roman Holiday

Wang started her Vespa group on douban.com a year ago, and since then scooter fans from all over the country have gathered to share pictures, videos and news about Vespa. Over 400 users have joined the group, most of whom are Mod stylists eager to show off on the street like the style's pioneers in 1960s London.

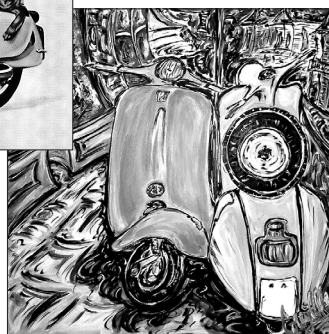
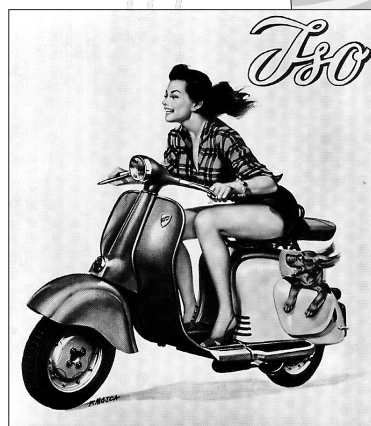
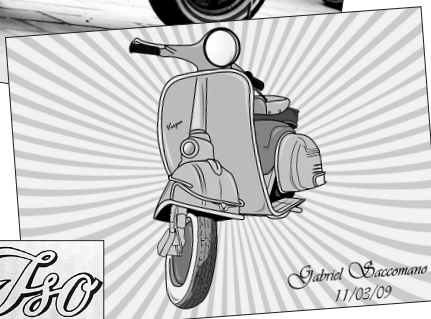
But Wang says she has no interest in dress. Her first encounter with the Vespa was the movie *Roman Holiday*, a classic in which Gregory Peck rides the scooter with Audrey Hepburn on Italy's narrow streets.

"I've been collecting European posters from the 1950s to 1970s for 10 years. The Vespa was a popular icon to balance out human figures. To me, the vehicle is not only a machine but also part of modern Italian culture and design," Wang says.

Lu Jiankun, a local owner of three Vespa scooters and a motorist since high school, agrees. He discovered the Vespa in 2000 in Thailand, where it is commonly used by Bangkok riders.

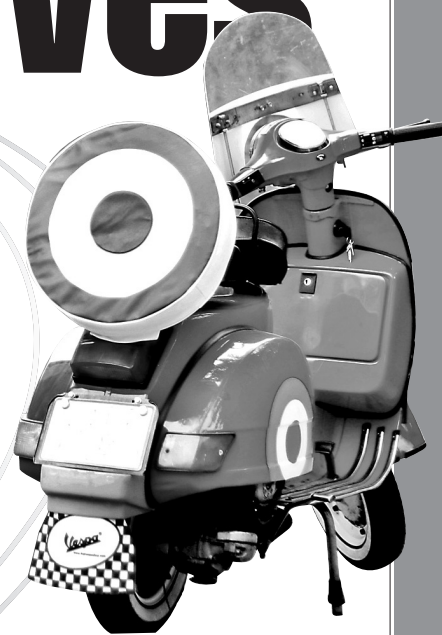
"I bought my first motor bike in 1996. But as a teenager, I was most into those high-emission monsters like the Honda VFR," Lu says. But people grow, and as a married man and successful clothing store owner, Lu found himself drawn to smaller machines. Lu bought his first Vespa three years after he tried the scooter in Thailand.

"The Who are the other important figures who



To rider Lu Jiankun, the Vespa is a lifestyle rather than scooter series.

Photo by Song Nannan



introduced Vespa to me when I saw live videos of them with their scooters on stage," he added.

Still rarely available in China

Wang's group on douban.com is "Dreaming of a Vespa," which reflects the reality of ownership in China: the scooters are popular but rarely available. No Vespa scooter has been officially imported to China, leaving fans to work with European exporters or hunt the dump.

A P-series Vespa scooter can cost as much as 10,000 yuan, while the more popular VBB-series may cost 30,000 yuan. Staggeringly high tariffs on motor vehicles have sent many fans to coastal regions like Guangdong to comb the markets.

"Buyers may get cheated by dealers first. Sometimes you have to pay a lot of money for a Vespa – far more than its original price. But if you love it, you'll buy without regrets," Lu says.

Most of the Vespa scooters in China are scrap with dead engines. Lu's first Vespa, a blue one made in the 1970s, took him about a year to fix. His machinist friend helps him deal with repairs on his Vespa and other bikes.

"It is because of him that all of my three scooters work well and I can continue to buy new machines free from any worries about mechanical problems," Lu says. But a master cannot fix a machine without matching parts. Sometimes Lu has to take his scooter to Taiwan to source parts in its bike shops.

"Now Vietnam has become my favorite place to travel because it has a nice beach for my wife and lots of Vespa scooters for me," Lu says.

Lu usually rides his Vespa scooter from his home outside East Fourth Ring Road to his clothing store in the Dongsi area. As one of the most famous Vespa owners in the city, his scooters have been borrowed by Lacoste and other brands for promotions.

Many fans who have enough money to bring a dream Vespa back to China are less lucky. Most of their scooters cannot move and are put in the garage as an antique. But Lu says that's a shame given how rare it is to see a Vespa. "If some of them (broken Vespa owners) read this story, I hope they contact me so I may help them to get their rides fixed," Lu says.

Lu continues to customize his Vespas and has added many new parts. "People think Vespa is kind of a mystery because owners don't ride out so often. I hope one day, Vespa riders in Beijing can travel together out to the suburbs, stop at the river, play soccer and have a barbecue. That's the real joy of these scooters," Lu says.

Fight summer depression with amusing gadgets

By Wang Yu

The past two months have been extremely hot and humid; air conditioning and cold drinks can only go so far to make people feel better. Troubles at work or with family and friends may push people over the edge, to rage or depression.

But medication or psychotherapy is not the only answer to this problem. Joey Zhou, a blogger and expert on "amusing, useless inventions," recommends toys from all over the world to help people who are seeing red or blue this summer. All the products mentioned below are available on taobao.ixiqi.com.



Skin Ball

Photo by Song Nannan

The weather is too hot for outdoor sports, but this is not an excuse for everyone to slack off. If the mirror of Snow White's wicked stepmother can answer the question Who is the fairest of them all?, the Skin Ball (238 yuan) can say Who is the fattest of them all.

The Skin Ball is a human body analyzer, which measures body fat, bone strength, skeletal muscle mass and the amount of body water. These are the four factors that guide fitness trainers help their clients build muscles or lose weight.

The gadget is easy to use. The first time, you need to key in your sex, height, weight and age. Next, hold the ball in your hands and press the "detect" button. The data will then appear on the big LED screen. A Skin Ball can store the information of as many as 10 users. It also works as a clock, so users can bring it to the office and people will think they are busy trying to finish work on time.

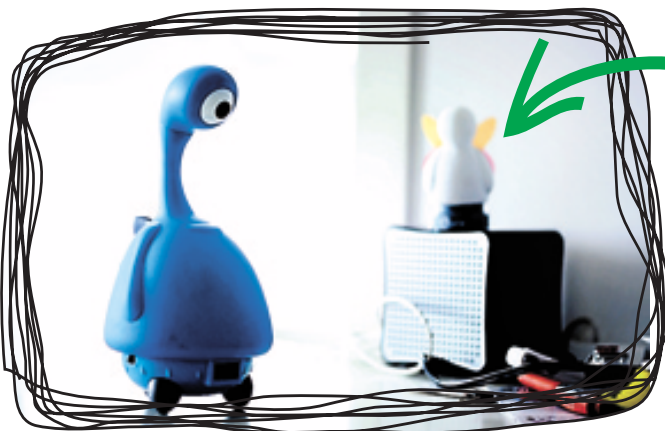


Photo by Song Nannan

Pet's Eye View Camera

Have you ever wondered how it would be to live the life of your cat or dog? Someone tried to answer this question by customizing his camera and attaching it to his dog's collar to take photographs that show the world from a pet's eyes. People who have the same curiosity but lack the gadget might want the Pet's Eye View Camera (448 yuan).

The camera has a 640 x 480 resolution and hooks easily to pet collars. It can snap photos at 1-, 5-, or 15-minute intervals. At

the end of the day, owners will discover their pet's best friend or favorite hiding place. They might also find that sock they have been looking for for weeks.

The camera has two buttons, a red and green LED and a two-digit LCD indicator. Users can charge the camera via a USB port, and it can be recognized by both Windows and Mac operating systems. But note that images come out blurry when there is not enough light. The camera can take a few splashes, but is not completely waterproof.

Amusing, useless inventions Part 3

Twilight Turtle

What is the relationship between a sea turtle and the night sky? We could not figure it out until we saw the Twilight Turtle (330 yuan).

Here is the story behind the toy: Nestled at the bottom of Lazy Creek was a beautiful heart-shaped pond, which was the perfect place for Papa Turtle to teach his new baby all the wisdom he once learned from his own papa. Every day, they would follow the creek from sunset until the stars came out.

One day, the streams went in three different directions, and to Papa's surprise, Baby Turtle started walking down the correct stream back to the pond by following the stars. Today, the Twilight Turtle helps pass on the knowledge and wisdom that came from his Papa and his Papa's papa.

This sounds like a children's story, but Twilight Turtle is for everyone. Once you put the sleeping turtle in a dark room and turn on its switch, its shell becomes a projector that draws a starry night sky onto the walls and ceiling.

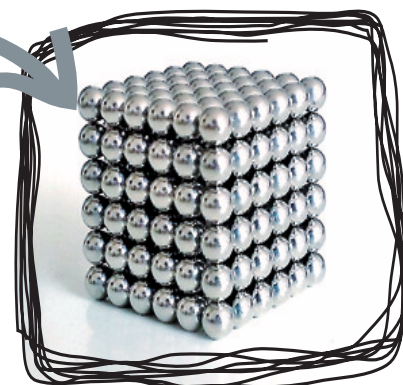
Users can choose either blue, green or amber to create their magical, tranquil and romantic environment. If you look carefully, you will discover eight star constellations such as Gemini, Pegasus and the Big Dipper. Although it was designed to help children fall asleep, it can turn any bedroom into a wonderland.

Magcube

Magcube (480 yuan) can help people kill time, de-stress and create artwork. Made up of 216 magnetic balls, the cube can be rebuilt into a variety of shapes and patterns, including accessories like necklaces, rings and bangles.

But sculptures will be the real test of users' imagination and artistic taste. We've seen Magcube turned into everything from a basket to the head of Mickey Mouse. The little balls seem to come alive in your hands and their feel will help induce relaxation.

Users don't have to be afraid that their magnetic art works will collapse as Magcube is made from strong neodymium magnet. It is also because of this that buyers are cautioned to keep the cube away from magnet-sensitive objects such as watches, CRT screens and credit cards. And the toy is not allowed on a plane!



Nobby

We're not sure whether Nobby (138 yuan) originated from earth or outer space because of his odd look. Nobby is actually a voice clock designed by Tom Lawton, the Brit who invented Firewinder, a wind-powered outdoor light.

Nobby is ultra intelligent: he sings, talks and recognizes people's voice. In time mode, he can tell the time whenever asked; in voice recognition mode, users can tell him what time they would like to be

woken up. He will even repeat the time for confirmation, just like a hotel's wake-up service.

People who are at home alone and lonely can also chat with Nobby. He can answer six set English questions with a variety of cheeky answers. Nobby can be plugged into an electrical socket or operated with three AA batteries – if you want to take him out for dinner with you and your new sweetheart.

Remember to call out his name first if you want him to do something. Also, you have to speak to him gently or he may not answer at all.



Photos provided by ixiqu.com

1^{New} Norwegian restaurant presents new menu



Inside the renovated Peppers restaurant



Cherry tomato salad, 48 yuan



Hot stone mix, 148 yuan

Photos provided by Peppers Pizza

By Jin Zhu

Peppers Pizza, a Norwegian restaurant in Sanlitun, has been resurrected as Peppers. To go with the abbreviated name is a new look and a heftier menu.

The restaurant is ideal for people who adore Western food but also want to eat healthy and maintain a good figure. An order of salad, heaped with organic fruits and vegetables from a Southern Beijing farm, is a wise way to start a meal. The cherry tomato salad (48 yuan), which comes with Italian mozzarella and a basil-olive dressing, tastes refreshing and is a good choice for the sweltering summer.

Despite dropping "pizza" from its name, Peppers still offers its old specialty. Besides regular crust pizzas, the restaurant offers thin crust pizzas. One of its most popular is the parma ham pizza (68 yuan for a 12-inch dish), oozing with mozzarella cheese and tomato sauce, and cooked with little oil.

The restaurant recommends its chicken pie – spicy chicken fillet with jalapeno, red onions mozzarella and pizza sauce. At 65 yuan for a 9-inch pie, the dish is enough for two diners.

Popular among customers is Pepper's hot stone mix (148 yuan), which contains baked beef, chicken, lamb and pork. As its name indicates, the dish is served on a hot stone plate to keep it warm.

Peppers is also a good choice for daytime family get-togethers. Its green sofas, wooden tables and wall paintings of trees create a soothing atmosphere.

The restaurant's second floor was designed especially for children. Tables and tableware are in smaller sizes. There, children can also make their favorite pizza with the guidance of staff members.

Peppers

Where: S4-33, The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – midnight

Tel: 6415 0888

Cost: 100 yuan per person



Parma ham pizza, 48 yuan

KTV giant's Japanese and Western buffet brand

By Wang Yu

Duozuo, managed by KTV chain Melody, is no ordinary karaoke room food. It is the company's new buffet brand featuring Japanese and Western cuisine.

Although all of Duozuo's chefs are Chinese, their creations are inspired by traditional Japanese and French cooking. They do a pretty good job with the basic sushi, and even came up with new inventions such as the shrimp sushi covered with fried egg.

Their sashimi is fresh, especially the salmon, which is not cut too thin. The golden roasted shrimp, prepared with bearnaise sauce is sure to satisfy the taste buds of sauce lovers.

The restaurant's French goose liver pate with fruit is highly recommended. The liver is crushed and soaked for 12 hours in milk, brandy, salt and black pepper until it becomes smooth. Afterwards, it is steamed for 50 minutes, then served with strawberry jam, orange, radicchio, frisee and macaroni. A piece of toast is a great substitute for macaroni.

Duozuo was designed as a buffet restaurant, but it also has an ala carte menu. The restaurant ensures that special orders are prepared fresh. It offers a wide range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Fresh fruit juice and house pours such as sake and French red wine are available at no extra charge.

The restaurant, located in Shuangjing, has contemporary Japanese decor. Everything from its ingredients to the design of its private dining rooms reflect quality and good taste. It is also an ideal venue for business meetings, family parties and get-together with friends.

Duozuo Restaurant

Where: 9/F Viva Beijing R&F Plaza, Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5903 7198; 5093 7199

Open: 11 am – 3 pm, 5-10 pm

Cost: 138 yuan per person for lunch; 258 yuan per person for dinner



Duozuo's delicately made sushi



Duozuo has nice dining atmosphere.

Photos provided by Duozuo

Hot pot and kebab

By Huang Xiao

Ziran, on Jiugulou Avenue, whips up delicious hot pot at affordable prices. Its three specialties are chicken pot (30 to 60 yuan), garlic rib pot (35 to 68 yuan) and fennel beef pot (35 to 68 yuan). Each item is available in three sizes to suit different group sizes.

Ziran, which means cumin in Chinese, is a spice that originated in the Mediterranean and Egypt, and is used to flavor kebabs – the restaurant's other specialty. The kebabs are grilled on one corner of the terrace, then swiftly delivered to customers. Its honey pork kebab (3 yuan a stick) is highly recommended.

Unlike hot pot in most restaurants, Ziran's hot pot meat is braised before it is served, so hungry diners can dig in as soon as their dish is served. The hot pot soup is very tasty. Order vegetables, tofu or noodles to throw into your pot. They will absorb the soup's flavor and is a way to maximize your meal.

In this heat, customers can get some breeze on the restaurant's arty second-floor's terrace. Multi-colored bottles hang from threads; light comes from bulbs hidden in bird cages; and trees given a feeling of seclusion.

In winter, diners can seek solace from the cold on the restaurant's first floor, which contains interesting Chinese paintings.

Ziran

Where: 141 Qingxiu alley, Jiu Gulou Dajie, Xicheng District

Open: 11 am – 1 am next day

Tel: 6402 6722

Cost: 30 yuan per person



Ziran hot pot

Photo by Huang Xiao

Voice lost and found

By He Jianwei

A deserted island is commonly invoked in metaphor as a place where an individual or group finds itself marooned, cut off from civilization. Since last month, big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have seen a "deserted island concert" each month, with "deserted island" signifying a niche genre of songs that talk about social issues and human sufferings.

At the end of this month, the second in the Beijing series of concerts will feature Wan Fang, a Taiwanese pop singer, who will sing and read poetry about climate change and gender equality.

Wan has produced many hit tunes in her 20-year career. She is also an actress and

has received two Best Actress awards at the Golden Bell Awards — Taiwan's most prestigious recognition for radio and

TV performances.

Although pop music has defined Wan as an artist, she also champions oft-ignored songs about social issues. She is a person who has an inner rebellious streak: She was born left-handed, but her parents trained her to use her right hand when she began painting as a child.

"When they left my room, I used my left hand again. I felt the real me came out whenever I used my left hand," Wan said.

In the summer of 2007, the first Women's Voices Festival was held in Taipei. Female artists, through solo performances, shared their emotions, thoughts and experiences. Wan, one of the performers, told the

audience how she found her true self and sang about the "buried" parts of her life.

Her upcoming Beijing show, titled "Singing in My Room," will begin with the story of her left hand and go on to embrace the cries of the bigger world.

Singing in My Room

Where: Che Action Theater, 2/F Chaoyang Culture Center, 17 Jintai Li, Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: July 31, 7:30 pm

Admission: VIP 280 yuan (260 yuan advance purchases); 180 yuan (160 yuan advance purchases); Tickets are available from shop33415346.taobao.com
Tel: 8599 1188

Wan Fang



5 Friday, July 24

Exhibition Mathias Bräschler and Monica Fischer Photography Exhibition

Where: Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery II, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 10, daily, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9262

Shin Hyun Kyoung Solo Exhibition

Where: Gallery Artside, Space 2, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 2, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9192

Movie The Burning Plain

Where: 1905 Movie Club, B2, 6 Xiangjun Bei Li, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: Free

Tel: 6591 8189

Nightlife

Acid Jazz Live @ Song

Where: Club Song, B108, The Place, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6587 1311

Dirty Party Electronic Music Live Show

Where: Club Obiwan, 4 Xihai Xiyan, Xicheng District
When: 11:30 am – 5 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8322 1231



6 Saturday, July 25

Exhibition Postcapital Archive

1989-2001

Where: Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 30, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9530

Ren Hang Solo Photography Exhibition

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-1 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: Until August 30, daily, 7 pm – midnight

Admission: Free (Entrance fee charged if there is a performance)

Tel: 6404 2711

Movie

K-20: Legend of the Mask

Where: 1905 Movie Club, B2, 6 Xiangjun Bei Li, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: Free

Tel: 6591 8189

Nightlife Bear Biscuit

Where: Hot Cat Club, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6400 7868

Summer of Love

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080



7 Sunday, July 26

Exhibition Born to be Wild

Where:

Mizuma & One Gallery, 241-15

Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 2, daily, 10 am – 6 pm (only reservations accepted on Monday and Tuesday)

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3267

Dai Hua Solo Exhibition

Where: DAC Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 30, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9096

Nightlife

Liu 2 & Erguang Band

Where: D-22, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6265 3177

New Generation

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

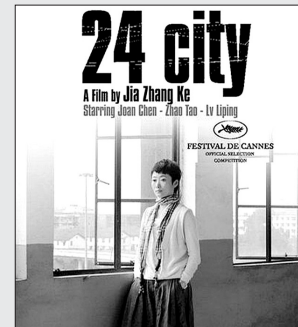
Movie W.

Where: 1905 Movie Club, B2, 6 Xiangjun Bei Li, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6591 8189



24 City

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-1 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711

Upcoming

Nightlife

Jeff Lang China Tour

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: July 29, 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in August

Concert

Audio-visual Concert of Symphonic and Wind Music

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 10-100 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

Violin and Piano Concert by Sheng Zhongguo and Seta Hiroko

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District

When: August 3-4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 10-100 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Italian Pianist Paolo Vergari

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District

When: August 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 10-100 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Iberia – Guillermo Gonzalez Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

The Rain of Flowers along the Silk Road

Who: Gansu Dance Drama and Opera Ensemble

Where: Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 1-2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Onegin

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 19-22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Prism – International Contemporary Dances

Where: People's Liberation Army Opera House, 60 Deshengmen Nei Dajie, Xicheng District

When: August 28-29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 60-580 yuan

Tel: 6673 6623

Opera

Ode to the Red Chinese Plum by the PLA Air Force Political Department's Art Troupe

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 7-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Jackie Zhang)

By Han Manman

Few would disagree that yoga is a great exercise for people pursuing health and inner peace. When done correctly, yoga helps the body become stronger and more flexible, calms the mind, sharpens concentration and improves breathing. When done wrong, it can cause pulled muscles, sore joints and possibly permanent disability.

Media reported last December that a woman from Chengdu, Sichuan Province, became a paraplegic after years of practicing yoga incorrectly.

Yoga is the world's second greatest source of sports-related injuries after salt water fishing, according to a recent survey released by the New South Wales Injury Risk Management Research Centre. The survey said a fourth of all yoga practitioners have been injured during sessions with most injuries occurring in the tendons and ligaments.

There are no regulations to ensure that teachers are qualified, which may be a contributing factor to yoga injuries in China, local experts warned.

Dangers of yoga

Last May, Geng Jin, a Beijing girl, was an hour into her workout when she felt a pop in her left knee then excruciating pain. She cried in relief the next day after her X-ray ruled out the possibility of a fracture.

"People think yoga can't hurt you because it's presented as something gentle," Li Jianmin, an orthopedist at Beijing Hospital said, "But it is not the risk-free physical activity you might think it is. Injuries are on the rise as more and more people try yoga." In the past months, he has treated an increasing number of patients with yoga-related injuries.

Yoga injuries occur easily because practitioners are too focused on their pose to respond to the body's warnings, Li said. Some, like Geng, simply push themselves too far. "I felt like my knee was going to pop every time I did a pose called a 'half-bound forward lotus fold,' in which the knee is bent and rotated to the side. I held the pose even though my body was trying to tell me something was wrong," Geng said.

Avoiding injury

1. Start slowly. Most injuries happen because an otherwise sedentary person enters an intermediate class with people 10 years his junior. This often results in the newbie struggling to keep up and overexerting himself. The instructor is often too busy tending to other students to notice.

2. Keep it small. Try to find a class that limits its head count to around 10. You'll have more hands-on guidance and be less likely to get yourself into a potentially dangerous position. A beginner who goes uncorrected from pose to pose is asking for an injury.

3. Know what you're getting into. There are 800 forms of yoga, so choose carefully. A restorative yoga class is likely to take it slow, while Ashtanga, or power yoga, tends to be strenuous. Bikram, "hot yoga," done in rooms heated to above 100 degrees, allows for maximum flexibility but can cause dehydration among the uninitiated and is a risk for people who have cardiovascular disease.

4. Find the right teacher. Keep in mind that there are no regulations in the yoga industry.

"Because yoga is so popular right now, many people are going to a weekend training class and calling themselves a yoga instructor," Li said. Ask teachers what kind of certification and training they've had and where else they have worked.

5. Warm up thoroughly before yoga. Cold muscles, tendons and ligaments are vulnerable to injury.

6. Listen to your body. If you are experiencing pain or exhaustion while participating in yoga, stop or take a break. If pain persists, speak with a physician.

7. Know your limitations.

It's better to practice a partial pose with good alignment than to push it into a full pose with poor alignment and face the risk of possible injury. Remember, yoga can be very physically challenging, so you must take care at all times to prevent injuries.

CFP Photo

New to yoga? Stretch with care

Types of injuries

Some yoga injuries are acute, others are chronic because of an ongoing repetition of poor technique.

Neck: Poses like the "plow," "shoulder stand" and "headstand" can be risky, because they put too much pressure on the neck when done improperly. Beginners should try these poses only under the close supervision of an experienced teacher.

Wrists: Have carpal tunnel syndrome? Then don't perform poses that put excess weight on your wrists. Wrists are vulnerable in weight-bearing postures such as the downward dog (hands and feet on the ground with legs straight and butt in the air) and plank (pushup position with arms and legs straight).

Knees: Injuries to the knees are among the most common in yoga. "With the knee, you must watch for poses that incorporate extreme bending or rotation, especially when those movements are combined," Li said.

Poses that incorporate the half or full lotus cross-legged position, or those such as the revolved side angle pose, where the knee is bent and rotated and taking some of the body's weight, are particularly hard on knees.

Lower Back: Forward and backward bends and twists, if done incorrectly, can result in back damage. Listen carefully to instructions and bend your knees to take pressure off the lower back.

Inversion Poses: Inversion poses like the shoulder stand and headstand put the head lower than the heart and raise blood pressure. Refrain from these poses if you have cardiovascular problems, hypertension, diabetes or glaucoma.

Treating an injury

Trusting your teacher is important, but students also must learn to pace themselves. Here are five steps to follow if you injure yourself during a yoga class:

1. Tell the instructor immediately if you hurt yourself.
2. Ice the affected area.
3. Keep weight off of the injury. Do not finish out the class.
4. Elevate the injured limb.
5. Massage, acupuncture and physical therapy have all been used to treat yoga injuries.

A slow walk through Suzhou

A city of canals, classical gardens and ancient homes

By Zhang Dongya

Suzhou, described by a Chinese proverb as "paradise on earth," is a city with a perceptibly slow rhythm. It is just the place to relax and have a break from the mind-numbingly fast-paced life in the metropolis.

Old houses, ancient bridges, canals, gardens and small alleys beckon visitors to explore the city. Suzhou has no airport; the governor has no intention of building one to preserve its quaintness, so people have to take a train to get there. This is the best way to start a trip that will remind people that slowing down is still possible in this day.



Pingjiang Road with its small shops is reminiscent of Beijing's Nanluogu Xiang.

Ancient Suzhou life on Pingjiang Road

Eight hundred-year-old Pingjiang Road made it to the list of the country's "10 history and culture streets," released by the government last month.

The street's name can be found on the Pingjiang Map, the map of Suzhou in 1229, in the Song Dynasty. The street is well preserved, one of the city's last remaining paved with cobble stones and with a canal on either side.

The canals are lined by old houses, owned mostly by elderly people who have lived there their whole lives.

Some of the houses on one side have been converted into clothing stores, cafes, bars and hotels. The area is reminiscent of Beijing's Nanluogu Xiang, which integrates the old and the new. Business establishments, when they shut for the day, still put long wooden boards over their door — just like residents do when they leave their house.

There are many arch bridges that link these canal communities to Pingjiang Road. Some of them are very distinctive, such as Hu Xiangsi (Lovesickness) Bridge, which is as old as Pingjiang. Hu Xiangsi is actually two bridges linked at the intersection of two rivers. It was given an imaginative name later on, but one mystery remains: Does Hu stands for the name of a person or the character "recklessly"?

Many ancient wells can also be found along the canals. Some are scattered along the numerous lanes that lie perpendicular to Pingjiang.

People who live on the old lanes still rely on the wells for water. They use small iron barrels to fetch water from the shallow shaft, and use the water for washing clothes. Then they pour the used water into the canal, just as residents have done for centuries.

Every morning, Pingtan, similar to the

north's *xiangsheng* or crosstalk, is broadcast in Pingjiang Road. Since no motor vehicles are allowed on the street, only the sounds of bicycles, tricycles and carts intermingle with the music.

Tourists who take a leisurely walk down the road will almost feel like they have been transported back to ancient China.

Recreational activities along Pingjiang Road

No matter whether day or night, visitors have a wide choice of recreational activities along Pingjiang Road.

People can rent a bicycle or tricycle and travel to one end of the road. Then they can hop on a boat to make their way back on the canal. In contrast with Hangzhou West Lake's all-male canal boat crew, Suzhou's boats are run by women. They are dressed in blue traditional clothes and entertain passengers with songs in the local dialect.

One alley branching off from Pingjiang is Zhongzhangjia Xiang, where both the Kunqu Museum and the Suzhou Pingtan Museum are located. Every Sunday afternoon, there is a two-hour Kunqu opera performance, which charges audiences 10 yuan.

Pingtan, a Suzhou performance art, is comparable to the north's *Xiangsheng* or crosstalk, except the dialogue and songs are accompanied by musical instruments. There are usually two performers, one with a *pipa* and the other with a *sanxian*, a three-stringed instrument that can be plucked or bowed.

In summer, the Pingtan Museum's theater is always filled with elderly residents who are busy drinking tea and fanning themselves with huge paper fans. Pingtan is performed in the local dialect with subtitles. Each show lasts 20 minutes and costs 15 yuan.

Along Pingjiang are also music stores, bookstores, cafes and bars that offer respite to hot and exhausted tourists.

Continued on page 21...



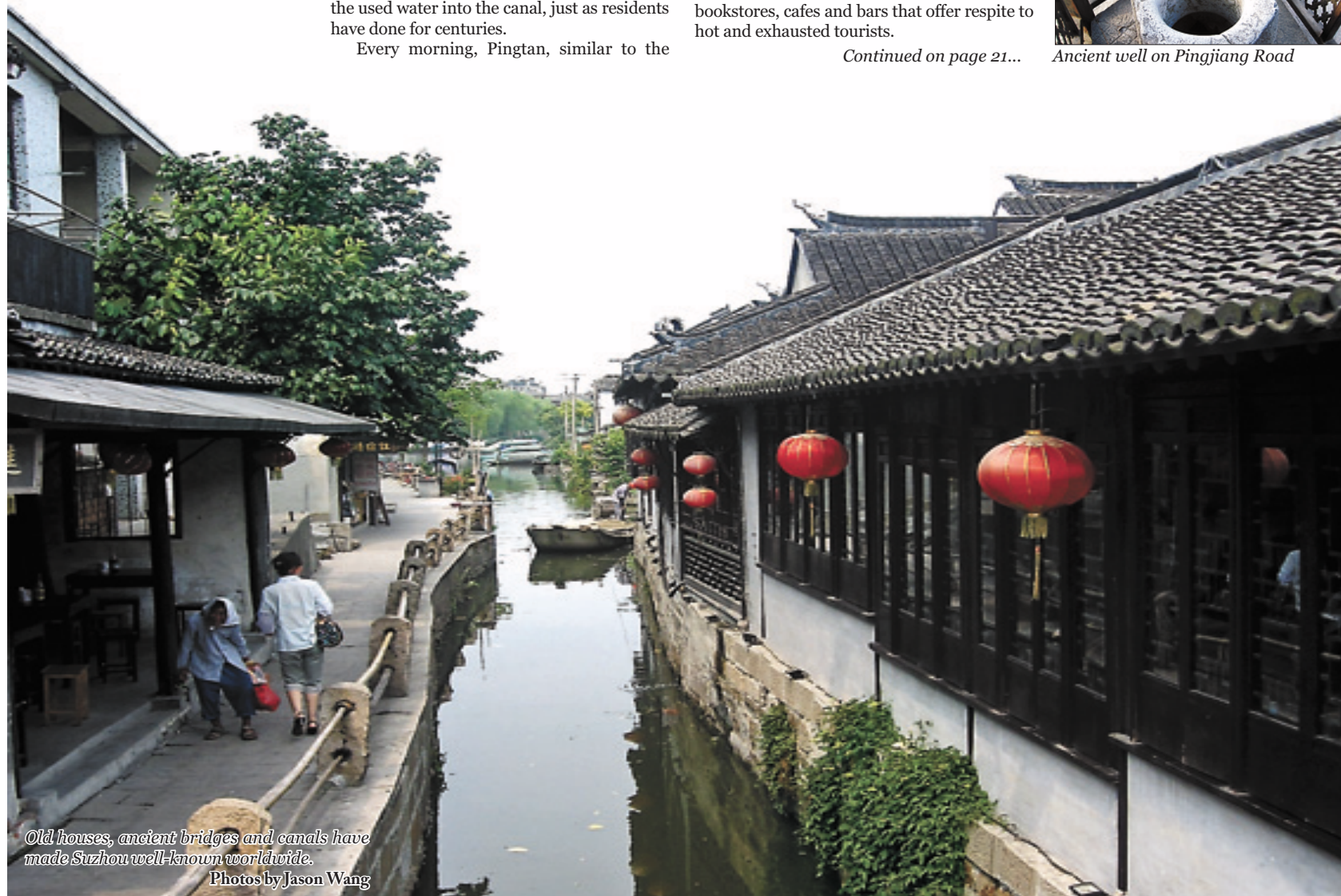
A Suzhou Pingtan performance



A shop where tourists can learn to play Chinese traditional musical instruments



Ancient well on Pingjiang Road



Old houses, ancient bridges and canals have made Suzhou well-known worldwide.

Photos by Jason Wang

... continued from page 20



In summer, ponds in Zhuozheng Park are shrouded with green lotus leaves.



Stone hills in Zhuozheng Park



An iron goods store in Zhouzhuang



A straw-shoe shop



Zhouzhuang is the country's most famous ancient water town.

Classic Suzhou gardens

A Chinese proverb says Jiangnan, an area by the southern Yangtze River, has the world's best gardens, and the best among them can be found in Suzhou.

Unlike Beijing's vast, maze-like imperial gardens, Suzhou's are small and began as private gardens. Their structures and designs have influenced architecture in other parts of the city.

Suzhou's largest and best known garden is Zhuozheng Park, built in 1509, in the Ming Dynasty, for a retired government official named Wang Xianchen. Apparently, Wang was not satisfied with his civil service performance, so he intended to compensate for it by planting trees and vegetables. Hence, the name of the garden: Humble Administrator's Garden.

Visitors need only two hours to roam the garden, which has three sections. The eastern section is dotted with hills, winding streams and dense bamboo and pine forests. The central section, the garden's most exclusive area, features clustered pavilions and courtyards. A third of it is covered by water. The western section houses the Mandarin Duck's Hall and the octagonal Pagoda Reflection Pavilion.

This season, lotuses are in full bloom and ponds are shrouded with green lotus leaves.

Other popular gardens in Suzhou are Liu Park and Ou Park. Both were built in the Qing Dynasty.

Zhouzhuang, ancient water town

The 900-year-old town Zhouzhuang is located southeast of Suzhou, an hour away by bus. The whole town is surrounded by water, which earned it the name of China's "first water town."

It looks similar to Pingjiang Road with its arched bridges and old homes with red lanterns hanging outside. Tourists can also hire a boat to go sightseeing around the town.

The ancient residences of well-known families are a must-see, an astounding slice of life from the past. The most popular of these houses are the Zhang and Shen houses built in the Ming Dynasty. They are huge and have complicated structures: They built separate houses, instead of rooms, for sleeping, eating, receiving guests and studying. The compounds have their own private classrooms, gardens with pools and small theaters for musical performances.

Visitors will also not want to miss a free Suzhou Opera performance at Zhouzhuang's old theater. Its troupe stages traditional operas like *The Romance of the West Chamber*, with Chinese and English subtitles.

Zhouzhuang's alleys are very narrow yet crowded with shops. Tourists might as well just go with the huge crowd's pace while enjoying local products such as silk fans, silk scarves and pearl jewelry.

The town has one commercial street, where tourists can rediscover the trades of ancient times. Vendors not only sell age-old products, but also use the techniques and equipment of times gone by.

At an iron goods store, a man sweats while working at a furnace, smelting iron. There are also people weaving, making straw shoes and doing carpentry work. It is common to see crowds of spectators form in front of each shop, modern-day city dwellers curious about the rural way of life in the past.

Travel information

Transportation

The fast train from Beijing to Suzhou takes 11 hours. Alternatively, visitors can fly to Hangzhou, Shanghai or Wuxi, and then travel by bus to Suzhou. The bus ride normally takes one to two hours.

Accommodation

There are five international youth hostels in Suzhou, two of which are on Pingjiang Road. One is Mingtang and the other is Xiaoya; both are members of Hostelling International, and offer discounts to members of the group.

Mingtang

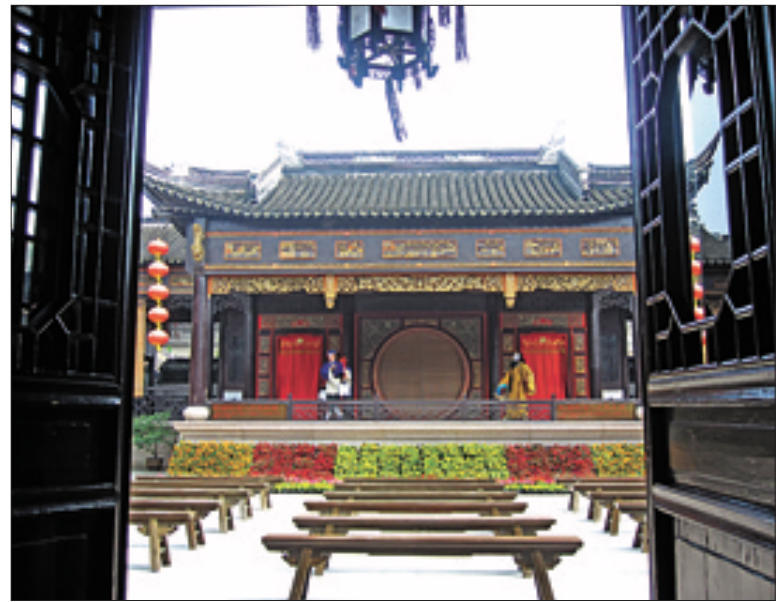
Where: 28 Pingjianglu, Suzhou

Tel: 0512 6581 686955

Xiaoya

Where: 21-1, Daxinqiao Xiang, Suzhou

Tel: 0512 6755 1752



Zhouzhuang's old theater stages free Suzhou Opera performances.



In Zhouzhuang's commercial street, tourists can rediscover the trades of ancient times.

Photos by Jason Wang

Performance

Magic Performance

The FISM (International Federation of Magic Societies) World Championships of Magic Beijing 2009 will be held Sunday at the China National Convention Center.

The championships are like the Olympics in the world of magic. This year, the event is coming to Beijing for the first time in its 60-year history. The championship is closed to the public: only magicians can get in.

But for the magically ungifted, Goose and Duck Sports Pub will host a magic show every night. Performers include Arthur Trace, a 2006 World Championships winner. Goose and Duck promises the performers will be accessible.

Where: Goose and Duck Sports Pub, 1/F Building 1, Green Lake Plaza, 105 Yaojiayuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Daily, 9 pm

Tel: 5928 3045



Arthur Trace

Tourism

Diving in Kefalonia

A world of vivid reefs, beaches with crystal clear waters and sea caves along the coast waits at the bottom of Kefalonia. On-site schools have diving programs for all ages. First timers can watch for a few minutes before taking their first plunge down to 6 meters. If you want to continue and become a registered diver, intensive courses are offered at regular intervals following a consultation with the school.

Cinema



Ice Age:

Dawn of the Dinosaurs

After the events of *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, life begins to change for Manny and his friends: Scratt is still on the hunt to hold onto his beloved acorn, while finding a possible romance in a female saber-toothed squirrel named Scratte.

When: From July 8

Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince

Harry Potter's sixth year at Hogwarts turns out to be quite the exciting year. First off is the arrival of a new teacher, Horace Slughorn, who is a bit more useful to Harry than he realizes. Next, Harry obtains a Potions book which used to belong to the very mysterious Half-Blood Prince.

When: From July 15

Theaters:

Stellar International Cineplex

Add: 5/F Jinyuan Shopping Center, 1 Yuanda Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8886 4988

Add: 4/F Wangjing International Business Center, 9 Wangjing Jie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5920 3788

UME International Cineplex

Add: 44 Kexueyuan Nan Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8211 5566

Add: 5/F Fuli Plaza, Shuangjing Qiao Bei, Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5903 7171

Imegabox

Add: F3 Jinlehu, Zhongguancun Plaza Shopping Center, Haidian District

Tel: 5986 3777

Add: F1, Sanlitun Village, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6417 6118

Wanda International Cinema

Add: Wanda International Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5960 3399

Dining

Hawka

Experience 50 types of Asian street foods in unlimited portions. Diners can also buy, drink or take home drinks from the Marriott's retail beverage market. Choose from specialty teas, juices, wines and imported beers, all at retail price.

Where: Marriott Beijing City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until July 31, 6:30-11 pm

Cost: 160 yuan net, including unlimited food and iced tea, four wine tasting coupons, two beer coupons, a raffle ticket and live entertainment

Tel: 5811 8266



Paradise for seafood lovers

Discover and enjoy the Magnifique Seafood buffet, a favorite of locals and visitors alike.

The Seafood Buffet offers a vast array of fresh seafood.

Where: VIC, Sofitel Luxury Hotels, Tower C Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Friday and Saturday, 6-10:30 pm

Cost: 268 yuan per person (subject to 15 percent surcharge), including unlimited French wine, local beer, soft drinks and fresh fruit juice

Tel: 8599 6666

Open bar brunch

Celebrate Sunday with a sumptuous brunch in the bustling Elements. Feast on a huge range of roast options and Pan-Asian delicacies from the live cooking stations.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Sunday, noon - 3 pm

Cost: 348 yuan per person, including free cocktails, spirits, beer, Munn Champagne and soft drinks; 288 yuan per person with free soft drinks and local beer; subject to 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 5865 5020



Fresh juice promotion

Come to the Atrium and Lobby Bar. Operating manager of Food and Beverage Anthony Alfonso has prepared some exquisite juices combos for visitors to try.

Where: The Atrium and Lobby Bar, the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 am - noon (Atrium), 6:30 am - 10:30 pm (Lobby Bar)

Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2116

Asian cold noodles selection

Immerse yourself in the flavors of Asian Cold Noodles.

Where: Atrium Cafe, Gloria Hotel Beijing, 2 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 31

Cost: 30 yuan, subject to 15 percent service charge

Tel: 6515 8855 ext. 2212

Australia promotion

Nine Marriott hotels in Beijing and Tianjin will feature the best Australian food and beverage in 14 of their restaurants. Experience quality Australian meats, seafood and dairy products, accompanied with superb wine and beers from various Australian regions.

When: Until August 23



Hotel

Cluster Hotels and Project Hope

Following successful charity drives through the years, 14 cluster hotels from InterContinental Hotels Group Beijing have jointly provided a caring hand for children's education by organizing the 5th annual Cuisine for a Cause culinary competition, with over 160 chefs and bartenders taking part in the showcasing event this year.

First tree house villas in Maldives

Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa, Maldives, will be the first resort in the country to feature tree house villas. Guests can experience a tree house villa by booking the exclusive opening offer and enjoy a seven-night stay while paying for five nights only. The offer includes benefits like return domestic flight transfers from Male to Gan and a daily half board and complimentary spa experience.

When: July 26 - October 31

New appointment to Fairmont Beijing

Global hospitality leader, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has appointed Hans Hordijk as the new general manager of the Fairmont Beijing. The role marks a milestone for the hotelier, whose passion for hotels has resulted in an impressive career spanning 20 years.

Aviation

The perfect blend

British Airways is brewing up the perfect afternoon tea with The Dorchester, one of London's most luxurious and iconic British hotels. The airline's new service, Afternoon Tea by The Dorchester, begins this autumn with the launch of the new first class cabin.

The new Afternoon Tea service from British Airways and The Dorchester will offer first class customers a mouth-watering selection of finely cut sandwiches and sumptuous cakes, served with a variety of flavorful teas from around the world.

Singapore Airline launches first A380 service

The Singapore Airlines A380 will land for the first time today at the Hong Kong International Airport. As many as 450 customers embarked on a journey between two of Asia's major commercial hubs on SQ 856, which departed from Singapore's Changi Airport Terminal 3 at 9:50 am. They are scheduled to arrive at Hong Kong International Airport at 1:30 pm. The superjumbo will set off for the return flight SQ 861 at 4 pm, landing in Singapore at 7:40 pm.



(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Pull your socks up, never give up on love

By Venus Lee

Last Sunday, I bumped into Yang Guotao, one of my university classmates, in a meeting of the school's alumni association.

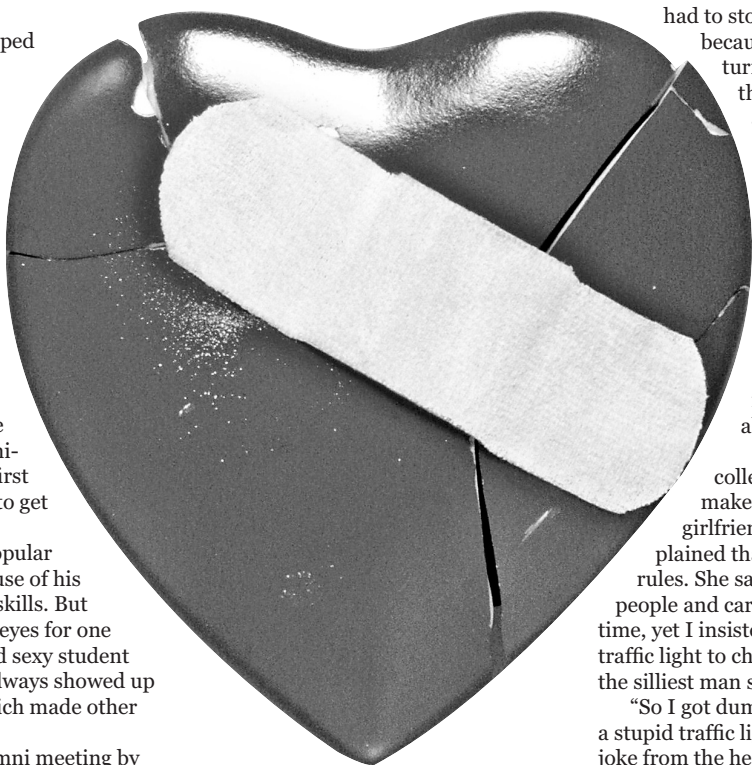
I learned he received his PhD this year and found a well-paid job in a financial institution. I consider Yang very blessed; his college grades were mediocre, but he got accepted for graduate studies in one of the country's best universities, and was the first among my classmates to get his doctor's degree.

He was also very popular among the ladies because of his charm and leadership skills. But in college, he only had eyes for one woman: a beautiful and sexy student from Germany. They always showed up together at parties, which made other men terribly envious.

He came to the alumni meeting by himself, so I asked after his German girlfriend. He gave me a sad smile and said they broke up a year ago after a big fight one night.

He and the woman were walking home from dinner that evening, Yang said. Because there were few vehicles and pedestrians, he crossed the road even while the traffic light was still green. But his girlfriend waited until the light turned red before catching up with him.

"She was mad and said I was a man who lacked culture and an understanding of proper public behavior," Yang said. "I was terribly irritated because I didn't think it was a big deal. She had



been in China for a year and knew how things worked here."

The horrifying thing was that Yang's next love relationship ended in the same way. "It may sound ridiculous but it is true," he said, looking a bit embarrassed.

He met his next girlfriend through one of his colleagues. He and the woman had been together for several months and things looked promising. He was walking her home from a party late one evening when the woman's mother phoned and asked her to come home right away.

They quickened their pace, but

had to stop at an intersection because the traffic light turned green. Yang took the woman's hand in a firm grip and said, "Don't cross until the traffic light turns red." But the woman shook off his hand and quickly crossed the street. She was already a hundred meters ahead of him by the time he crossed the street. She refused to speak to him all the way home.

A few days later, his colleague and their matchmaker told him what his girlfriend said. "She complained that I was obsessed with rules. She said there were few people and cars on the street at the time, yet I insisted on waiting for the traffic light to change. She said I was the silliest man she knew," Yang said.

"So I got dumped again because of a stupid traffic light. It's like an awful joke from the heavens," he said. Those two experiences left him bewildered and discouraged with love.

I tried to make him feel better. "It's not your fault that you have cultural or personality differences," I said. "Never give up, just pull your socks up!"

He looked down at his shoes in confusion. "My socks are ok, why do you ask me to pull them up?" he said in a serious voice.

I burst into laughter. "Pull your socks up means don't lose confidence and just improve yourself." Understanding dawned and Yang laughed too. "See, I've become a fool after those two failed love affairs. What am I supposed to do?"

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Overseas media says

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): The writer here has gotten confused with the singular and plural form of the word "medium"; media is the plural form of medium. For instance, Newspapers, magazines and billboards are important media for advertising. Sometimes "mediums" is used, but "media" is more common in technical and scientific work. So, it is wrong to say "Overseas media says," but rather, "Overseas media say."

Native Speaker Penny Turner (PT): Nowadays, "media," when it refers to the mass media, is taken as a singular noun just as often as a plural noun. Merriam-Webster has an interesting explanation why we find ourselves at this juncture. It says, "the popularity of (media) in reference to the agencies of mass communication is leading to the formation of a mass noun, construed as a singular. This use is not as well established as the mass-noun use of data and is likely to incur criticism especially in writing." So if you don't want to be criticized, remember that media is a plural noun, and thus, takes a plural verb.

2. A lack of protection to turn

ZS: The phrase "to turn to" means "to go to for help." For instance, You are the one man I should turn to in difficult times. She has a lot of friends and always has somebody to turn to in times of distress. "Turn to" is a set phrase when it means this; you cannot do without "to." Even an infinitive phrase used as an attributive, as we have in the line above, must be written this way: A lack of protection to turn to.

PT: Yes, there should be a "to" that comes after "to turn," otherwise the meaning of the phrase changes. The idiom can also mean two other meanings. One is "to begin work" or "to apply oneself to," such as, She turned to writing novels after her youngest child was born. Another is "to refer to" or "to consult," such as, He turned to the Internet for a Mediterranean food recipe.

3. A total 74,000 volunteers

ZS: As is the tendency nowadays, people are not very careful with the use of such phrases as "a total of" and "a couple of." I have recently seen such recurring mistakes. I think this "vandalism" in oral communication we can let pass, but not so in standard and formal English writing. It should not be "a total 74,000 volunteers" or "a couple years"; we need to say a total of 74,000 volunteers, a couple of years, a couple of people.

PS: Our fast food, text messaging – and now tweeting culture – has resulted in the "abbreviation" of English sentences such as the phrase above. On a parallel topic, do you know that some English words have gone out of use that they are in danger of being erased from the dictionary? Last year, *Time* magazine reported on how the UK's Collins English Dictionary was planning to remove such words from their latest version: caliginosity (dimness, darkness), embrangle (to confuse or entangle), fubsy (short and stout), agrestic (rural), recement (waste, refuse). But Collins said it was doing this to "make room for up to 2,000 new entries."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Strictly prohibiting long over-length incense

By Tiffany Tan

The Lama Temple is rarely missing from lists of Beijing's top 10 tourist attractions. So when the municipal government made a determined effort to fix Beijing's Chinglish signs in the lead-up to the Olympics, you would think the monastery would have also been on the project's top 10 list. It is possible the overworked experts (and boy, did they have a lot of work!) just missed this sign.

The temple forbids visitors from lighting very long incense sticks to prevent a fire from brining to an end its 300-year-old history, and to minimize how much ash gets

blown around the compound. "Long over-length" to describe incense sticks is redundant; you can instead use "overly long" or "overlong" to describe them.

Outside the temple, I saw vendors waving around incense sticks that looked at least 12 inches, or 30 centimeters, long. So that is not considered overly long? I asked myself. What I think would help tremendously is to indicate the maximum allowed length for the sticks: 40 centimeters, or 15.5 inches, based on the research by one of our reporters. This way there is no confusion about what "long over-length" really means.

参观雍和宫往
南走约150米。
严禁携带超长
香进入雍和宫。

PLEASE GO STRAIGHT ON
FOR ABOUT 150 METERS
TO YONGHEGONG.
STRICTLY PROHIBITING
LONG OVER-LENGTH
INCENSE IN YONGHEGONG.

Movie of the week

Director James Gray's fourth movie is interesting and nuanced, with fantastic cinematography. The cast, which includes Joaquin Phoenix, Gwyneth Paltrow and Isabella Rossellini, requires no introduction.

The most startling aspect of the movie is Phoenix's performance. There is something profoundly moving and truthful in his portrayal. Paltrow is wonderful as the girl walking an emotional tightrope, and Vinessa Shaw is a real find. Rossellini is beautiful and intense as Phoenix's mother, but unlike many of her contemporaries in that she is not "cosmetic," rather like her mother Ingrid Bergman.

Synopsis

This romantic drama set in New York tells the story of Leonard (Joaquin Phoenix), an attractive but depressed young man who moves back in with his parents following heartbreak. His concerned parents set him up with Sandra (Vinessa Shaw), the sweet and caring daughter of a close family friend. A big family dinner serves as their introduction, and Leonard arranges to meet her again.

Late one night, Leonard glances out his bedroom window and notices a ravishing young woman he's never seen before. Michelle (Gwyneth Paltrow) recently moved into an apartment in his family's building – an apartment paid for by the wealthy married man she's seeing. And then something happens.



Two Lovers (2008)

Scene 1

(Leonard meets Sandra at the family dinner for the first time.)

Leonard (L): Sit down if you want.

Sandra (S): You have a lot of DVDs.

L: Yes, do you like movies?

S: Yes, I love movies.

L: What movies do you like?

S: Well, probably my favorite movie is *The Sound of Music*. Not because of the film itself, but whenever it's on, my family always watches it. It's that kind of thing.

L: It is actually a good movie, underrated (1).

S: Can I look at these?

L: Yeah, those are ... that's the good pile (2). This is the garbage pile ...

S: Oh, these are nice. But you don't have any people in them really.

L: Yeah, well, you know. People look at them, they don't have to be in them too.

S: I like this one.

L: Thanks. Gotta be in the moment (3). So what do you do?

S: I work at Pfizer in the city, it's a drug company.

L: Yeah, I know it well. I have some ones with some people in them. I was just going through these ...

S: Who's ... who's that in this photo here?

L: Oh, that was ... I don't even know what that's doing there. That's so weird. That was my fiancé.

S: Your fiancé? You were engaged?

L: Yeah, a couple years ago. She's gone, though. She moved away.

S: What happened?

L: You know, um ... We got these genetic tests and we were both positive



for Tay-Sachs disease. It means if we ever had kids, they'd be, like, dead after a year, so ... She didn't want to adopt and, well, that was that.

S: I'm so sorry.

L: Mmm, probably for the best (4).

Scene 2

(Leonard and Sandra have lunch together.)

S: My parents finally got the pictures back from the bar mitzvah.

L: Oh, they ... they like the dancing shots in the ballroom?

S: They love them ... Um, I got something for you.

L: A gift?

S: Yeah. It's ... you know, it's winter out, it's cold, and I noticed that you don't wear any gloves.

L: Oh, these are nice.

S: You like 'em?

L: Yeah, it's got the stitching. I've never seen anything like this. That was very sweet of you. Thanks.

S: No big deal. What's wrong? You OK?

L: Yeah. Yeah, I'm just thinking about a friend of mine. She's kind of going through some tough stuff (5), so ... I don't want you and I talking about it ...

S: No no, it's OK. I love your hands. They're so gentle.

L: I hate these scars ...

S: Leonard, I, um ... I want to take care of you. I feel like I understand you. You're different. You don't pretend to be something you're not. So you don't have to worry about anything. You don't have to be embarrassed ...

L: Thank you. You know, I got a lot of stuff going on right now that's ... I don't even know what it's like to just be myself right now.

Scene 3

(In Sandra's father's office, Michael Cohen talks with Leonard about how his relationship with Sandra affects both families and their business.)

Sandra's father Michael Cohen

(C): I'm glad you could make it in today

for our meeting, Leonard. Just take a look around the business, acquaint yourself with (6) what's going on here. A kid's got to start thinking about his future sometime.

L: Oh, I do.

C: Well, this is your opportunity right here, right now. It could be a terrific thing. A fresh start for you and Sandra. My daughter is crazy about you. And believe me, there's lots of guys after her. The most important thing is to give her what she wants because she is my life. So I'm going to ask you a question now. And I'm going to be direct with you. I hope you don't mind. Are you a fuck-up?

L: I don't think so.

C: Do you know why I'm asking you this question, right?

L: Well, I think it's because of Sandra.

C: It's Sandra and the merger. This is a terrific thing for you, a terrific thing, to turn your life around.

L: I understand that.

C: This business is important to me. Your father has a hell of a (7) good location out there. And we're going to be moving into that space soon. And when we do, there is an opportunity here for you, for your father, for your family, for your future family. If you apply yourself and I know you're going to. I think you know how important this is for everybody.

L: Yes.

C: Good. Good.

Vocabulary

1. **underrated:** underestimated
2. **pile:** a quantity of objects stacked or thrown together in a heap
3. **be in the moment:** here it means be in certain circumstance
4. **for the best:** with good intentions

5. **going through some tough stuff:** be in a hard time
6. **acquaint sb. with:** to introduce someone to an unfamiliar thing
7. **a hell of a:** very

(By Wang Yu)

